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## ARTICLES

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# AFTER THE LETTERS? THE ECOLOGY OF LITERACY IN AULUA, VANUATU<sup>1</sup>

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## **Abstract**

*Understanding how existent literacy is performed or practised within a given sociocultural setting can illuminate how to best institute changes in the patterning of literacy in that community. This paper offers an ethnography of literacy in a small community in Vanuatu whose members share a vernacular, Aulua, as a mother tongue, are educated in either French or English, but who write predominantly in the creole, Bislama. A close investigation as to how these languages are distributed across various types of literacy practices and reveals how the languages in this setting inhabit different ecological niches. The two high status languages, English and Bislama are written and read in different contexts, while Aulua speakers (as yet) do not read or write in their own language. While some steps towards vernacular literacy as the foundation for primary school study have been taken by the community, my approach suggests that reading and writing in the first year of school will not challenge the status of Bislama as the dominant language of literacy events outside class.*

## **The linguistic situation**

The community under investigation here is defined by its use of Aulua as the normal means of communication within the home domain. Speakers of this language number roughly 700 and live in the three main villages or their satellite hamlets along a short stretch of the coastline of South East Malakula, the second largest island of Vanuatu.

Aulua is but one of around thirty languages of this island, and is one of one hundred plus vernacular languages spoken in the republic. While the language of the home domain remains (as yet) Aulua, other more public or extralocal ways of communicating require other languages. No single indigenous Oceanic language is known by all Ni-Vanuatu. However, Bislama, a creole language developed on the canefields of Queensland, Fiji, and Samoa is known by nearly 100% of the population. Ni-Vanuatu often strongly identify with the creole as a language that reflects a shared identity for all citizens of the republic and for this purpose it is enshrined as one of the official languages in the constitution. As part of its unifying appeal, Bislama cuts across the Anglophone-Francophone divide which resulted from the colonial period which saw the Condominium of the New Hebrides co-ruled by the British and the French from 1906 until Independence in 1980. Condominium, however, is a somewhat misleading term for the separate rule that the British and

French ‘residencies’ imposed on the islands. Most of the archipelago was carved up into somewhat overlapping French and English spheres where each encouraged the adoption of their language and religion – English ~ Presbyterian, French ~ Catholic. In fact, Aulua was the site of a Presbyterian mission founded in 1887 (Miller, 1989, p.195). The first missionary, Reverend T. Watt Leggatt devised an orthography and with the help of two converts set about translating the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles into Aulua. The mission also offered education in Aulua and students came from all over the island to attend, making Aulua something of a lingua franca in Southern Malakula (Crowley, 2000, p.61). Missionary control of education was relinquished to the government (then the Condominium) by the end of the 1950s (Baldauf and Kaplan 2006, p.10), and it appears that substantive or widespread literacy in the language receded rapidly. At the same time, Bislama made its inroads in the church (Thomas 1990, p.237). After the achievement of Independence, the newly formed republic continued the dual language policy of the colonial powers, but added a third language, Bislama. Both colonial languages have official status alongside Bislama in the constitution, and surpass the standing of the creole in that French and English only are mandated as languages of education. Aulua, then, is a polyglossic community where domains, power and as we shall see relations to literacy are distributed unevenly.

## **Conceptual and methodological considerations**

The conceptual framework of this paper draws on the now considerable literature on the ethnography of literacy and the New Literacy Studies approach (Heath, 1983; Baynham, 1995; Besnier, 1995; Street 2001. See Hull and Schultz 2001 for an overview of literacy research paradigms). The first entails understanding the role of literacy within a given context and how it bears out other aspects of the culture of that site. This mode of making literacy site-specific requires us to understand that literacy may mean different things and be enacted in different ways in different settings. New Literacy Studies draws on traditions of sociology and linguistic anthropology and moves away from understanding reading and writing as private and individual acts and toward seeing literacy as embedded in other social practices. Both these schools suggest that the approach that equates literacy and literacy acquisition with educational settings needs to be challenged. Rather these frameworks ask questions about the practice of literacy in a given community and how it relates to other social and political forces in that environment as Ivanič (2004, p.235) summarised the social practice approach to literacy:

Writing is conceptualised as a part of ‘literacy’ more broadly conceived as a set of social practices: patterns of participation, gender preferences, networks of support and collaboration, patterns of use of time, space, tools, technology and resources, the interaction of writing with reading and of written language with other semiotic modes, the symbolic meanings of literacy, and the broader social goals which literacy serves in the lives of people and institutions.

To understand the roles literacy plays in a community we need to reconsider the relationship between literacy and power, particularly in multilingual settings where languages and the sites of literacy may not be evenly distributed. By sites of literacy, I mean not only the physical context of literacy events but how they are linked to institutions which subscribe particular ways of speaking, writing and reading. To this end my aim is an ethnography of the Aulua setting. In this paper I seek to provide a detailed description of the locale and the literacy events I observed and participated in over a considerable period of time. I have made eight visits for up to five months at a time to the Aulua villages since 2000 as part of a language documentation project and have become somewhat embedded in village life. While not claiming status as an insider, I am part of and observe the consequences of a web of kinship ties and have had roles in both *kastom* (traditional) and contemporary village events such as circumcision festivals, funerals, weddings, *ol morning toktok* or village meetings and the like. Moreover, this ethnography also traces responses to the question of literacy in the village over this period both as a researcher and as a participant in the literacy workshop discussed below and as (co-)producer and audience of texts at this site. Because of the importance of conveying the details of the setting and the kinds of literacy practices found there, this paper weaves narrative and analysis together.

## **Conceptualising literacy and polyglossia**

Given the complexity of the linguistic situation in Aulua, the question of relative status of each language and their relationship to literacy practices in this polyglossic setting is an important one. My approach to this issue is similar to that taken by Wedin (2006) whose work investigates literacy in a rural multilingual setting in Tanzania. We shall see that this African setting has much in common with our Melanesian one, literacy and education, for example, are linked with the arrival of Christianity. Moreover, the multilingualism found in her site privileges both an international language, English, and a dominant local language, Swahili over a vernacular, Runyambo, a situation which has parallels with the relationships among English, Bislama and vernacular on Malakula and elsewhere in Vanuatu. She suggests we can understand these relationships as practiced through literacy via the terms that arise out of her ethnography. She identifies three types of literacy practices – dominant, semi-dominant, and dominated literacies. Wedin (2006, p.230) describes the first as:

... highly valued in the society and are used to govern and regulate the life and actions of the inhabitants. They are standardised and normative, form is more focused on than content and they are often examined and deemed ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ according to formal norms. These literacy practices are prescribed by authorities such as schools, governmental institutions and, to a lesser extent religious institutions

### **Semi dominant literacy practices**

A semi dominant literacy practice according to Wedin (2006, p.233) “consists of literacies initiated by authorities”. Among the Banyambo, she claims a wide range of genres of reading and writing are of this type. These practices take place in religious settings, as well as literacies associated with commercial transactions and local organisation groups using minutes and agendas for meeting planning. She also includes personal letters in the semi-dominant class as they reproduce recognisable patterns taught in the schools.

Wedin’s third label, dominated literary practices I shall call private literacies while agreeing with her basic designation of these as communications that do not involve authorities. Despite this, in her setting institutionally dominant languages can be employed in the construction of texts. Genres of dominated literacy in Karagwe are the decorative use of language in homes, offices, and on clothing, advertisements and signs, as well as extended pieces of private writing in the form of diaries. I shall call private literacies those reading and writing practices which Aulua speakers engage in but without interacting with local or supralocal institutions. I have shied away from Wedin’s third category as it suggests a lack of agency in the taking up of literacies in this context.

Wedin’s taxonomy classifies the literacy event not the language of the event, and it seems that in contrast to her setting, there are much clearer boundaries between the ecological niches of the languages of Aulua. So while her categories make strong claims about the links between practice and power in the Karagwe district of Tanzania, emerging from my ethnographic analysis of Aulua below the categories dominant, semi-dominant and private demonstrate that in Aulua there is a more of a correspondence between institutionally mandated choices of language and category of literacy practice – dominant literacy practices restrict literacy to the official languages – metropolitan languages in school and predominantly Bislama in the church.

Semi-dominant literacy practices include text mediated interactions in the Aulua churches, settings which provide the particular frames or genres of language use, as well as more localised institutions such as the co-operative store, the water committees and other local power structures. While language choices may be prescribed *per se* by institutions, they may be influenced or derived from practical considerations within the community, and may be considerably more negotiable and multilingual than we find in dominant literacy practices.

Private literacy events fall outside of the jurisdiction of institutions either local or national, and include personal practices such as reading and writing for pleasure. As we shall see, however, these private practices are neither construed nor performed in ways that western practitioners might understand, and with little frequency in the Aulua context.

## **Dominant literacies in the Aulua locale**

Currently, the Aulua language has no role in education. Officially, the metropolitan languages French and English, the linguistic legacy of the Condominium, are used in the classrooms at the one primary school that serves the Aulua community and since 2000 there have been few Aulua speaking teachers employed there meaning teachers and pupils seldom share a vernacular. Students are assigned to either an English or French class in their first year. This language will remain the vehicle for their education for their school career. It is not always the case either that siblings will share the same language of education. Despite its constitutional status, Bislama is forbidden, though this language does play a role in social communication on the playground and between anglophone and francophone teachers. It is also heard *sotto voce* as a paraphrase of English directions in some classrooms.

For around ninety percent of the population school finishes around the age of eleven after the class seven examinations. The few that pass might go on to a high school if their family can afford it. The fees for high school are beyond the bounds of the mostly subsistence farming Aulua people. Of those few fortunate enough to make it to high school only a small percentage will reach the final year of secondary education either through lack of achievement in end of year exams or for financial reasons.

It is also important to understand that Aulua School is not within the bounds of a village, but is situated in a bay between two of the major settlements. Moreover, the school staff live on site and have their own food gardens supplemented by store-bought food, and do not participate in village activities to any great extent. Nor do most of the staff have kin links to the Aulua people which restricts their sociality with the villagers since kin networks are the major sources of social contact. Given that the school is not within the bounds of a village, it seems that French has its own physical space as well as linguistic niche separate to the rest of the community, as French is not heard in any other contexts in the community.

## **Semi dominant literacies in Aulua**

Bislama and occasionally English, though, have a role to play in the semi-dominant literacy events of the religious life of the community. In each of the three major villages there is a Presbyterian Church, the denomination to which the overwhelming majority of the population belong. One smaller village, however, is exclusively Seventh Day Adventist. Texts in the Presbyterian Church are in Bislama and English, while Aulua is reserved for the recitation of prayers known by heart and a few hymns. Interestingly, literacy skills in Bislama are not directly taught to Aulua speakers. Rather, skills learnt in school in English or French are privately transferred by Aulua speakers so that they can read the Bislama Bible and hymnbooks. However, there is ambivalence about the function of texts in the context of the church. As my write-up of notes from observations in the Lanvitvit Church demonstrates, there is

movement in and out of languages, and a multitude of versions of the Bible present. For many in the congregation, it seems, the presence of religious texts is more important than their actual use.

The congregation begins to gather when the tamtam or slitgong is beaten about half an hour before the service proper. The drum signals worship will begin soon. Usually by this time the deacons and the pastor have gathered at the church. Ordinarily, women and children arrive first and sit in seats that are parallel to the altar. Older children sit at the front, and the mothers keep toddlers and babies with them, though babies may be passed round, and toddlers are free to wander throughout the service. They begin to sing choruses - simple short songs sung either in English or Bislama. One member of the congregation will start a chorus and the rest will join in. At the end, there is a pause before someone self-selects and starts another one. A quarter of an hour before the service starts the tamtam is beaten again. More women and children, and some husbands and fathers arrive and sit on the benches that run along one wall perpendicular to the altar. Men tend not to join in the chorus, though by now a deacon will start to admonish the congregation for not singing enthusiastically enough using Bislama or English stock phrases such as 'clap your hands'.

The drum is struck for a final time and the deacons and pastor who has been sitting behind the altar, leave the church and gather in front of the entrance. The congregation rises as the officiating party moves down the aisle. When they are in their positions - pastor behind the altar, preachers on a side pew, the congregation sits.

The officiating deacon then welcomes and thanks the pastor. (This happens even if the pastor is from this village and is not visiting from one of the other two villages). The preacher accepts the thanks and announces a hymn in Bislama. The congregation stands and sings from the Bislama hymnbooks. On this occasion the preacher told the congregation to sit at the end of the hymn and announced that the service would be conducted in 'the company language' i.e., the one that all could understand because there were high school students from other parts of the country present.

The pastor announced the scripture verses and reads them from the Bislama Bible. (Some pastors read from English version). He noted that you could read along in whatever version you had. Some had Bislama Bibles and others various English translations. There was one worshipper with a Book of Mormon. Old issues of Time Magazine and

Reader's Digests are also flicked through by members of the congregation. Many people keep their photographs in their Bibles and these are passed around for inspection during service.

All then stood and said in unison the Apostle's creed which is known by heart. Some older males used English but the majority of the population use Bislama. The preacher called for people to sit and then requested a choir to form and come to the front. On this occasion no choir emerged prepared to sing together impromptu from the hymnbook, so one of the deacons stood up and called on (extended) family members to sing. He is from another island and sang in his own language from Ambrym Island.

Then an English language hymn was sung by the whole congregation. The preacher asked the congregation to be seated and then began his Bislama sermon on the themes of the readings. At the end of the sermon, the congregation say 'amen'. Then two deacons collected the offering in coconut shells. When they turn to bring the collection forward again the congregation stood and sang a hymn in Bislama.

The pastor then asked the congregation to remain standing to recite the Lord's Prayer in Bislama at their own pace. When the last amen is heard, the congregation sat. The preacher then invited the 'message deacon' to make announcements. He stood next to the altar and thanked the preacher in Aulua. He delivered his messages about matters to do with Sunday school and prayer meetings in Bislama. He invited the congregation to add more messages, and various members stood up from their seats and speak. All but one spoke in Aulua, the last in Bislama.

Then the deacon signalled that the service was over, and the congregation stood and sang a final hymn in Aulua, the same one every time. This is sung by heart and is not in the Bislama hymnbook which serves the Vanuatu Presbyterian population.

**Figure 1: At the Aulua Mission church, Lanvitvit – a collation of notes from observations in the field**

As the observations reveal, Aulua, Bislama, and English all play a role in the church service. However, Aulua and English are peripheral. Crucially, it is two national languages which are encoded in text. The Aulua portions are transmitted orally.

## Looking for signs of literacy in Aulua

Of course religion and (western) education are institutional settings for literacy practices, but what evidence can we find for reading and in writing in any language outside of the church and school? Graffiti, the age-old concomitant of writing, is evident in the names young men have carved, or carved when they were young, into prominent trees. Other than that, there is scant visual evidence for reading and writing events in the locale. Moving south along the coastal road/path we see some villages announce their names on hand painted signs. Likewise, outside the co-operative store, a few ephemeral handwritten and typewritten messages are posted mainly by the co-op management and the school. These messages detailing kava, copra, and cacao prices, or publicising school matters, are invariably in Bislama and demonstrate this language's role in semi-dominant literacy practices in the community. Further along the road, Aulua School has a permanent English sign giving its name and declaiming its patronage from various EU funding committees. In all the villages, there is only one permanent substantive sign. It outlines the rules of use of the new well at Aserukh which partially relieves the women of the burden of fetching from the river at the bottom of the hill. Written in Bislama, this text produced by the water committee of the village again fits Wedin's category of semi-dominant literacy – practices initiated by a very local institution. We will use the text of this sign to examine some of the features of locally produced texts in Bislama (see Figure 2).

In this text we can see some typical features of Bislama texts. The title on the notice board is in English while the main text is predominantly Bislama. Notice the variable spellings of *every/everi*. The first is, of course, Standard English, while the second is Bislama though, the perhaps the more common spelling *evri* reflects a more common pronunciation. This shifting between Bislama and English is quite frequently found in town Bislama, but in a village setting suggests that an educated local was responsible for the sign, and indexes the power associated with the choice of English in dominant literacy practices. Variability without recourse to codeswitching is also a hallmark of Bislama. Bislama does have a standard orthography but it is not widely disseminated due to its exclusion from the classroom. Writers who have acquired literacy in that creole informally will often entertain variant spellings of a single word within a single text which does not seem to trouble the readers.

<b>Bislama Text</b>	<b>My translation</b>
→10 VATU EVERY MANIS MAN WOMAN MO PIKININI	10 vatu every month for every man, woman and child.
→YU NO MAS SIT DAUN LONG TOP BLONG TANK FIN: 500 VATU	You must not sit down on the top of the tank. Fine 500 vatu.
→ENI DAMAG LONG TANK FIN 5000 VATU	Any damage to the tank Fine 5000 vatu
→WATA KOMITI NOMO I SAVE OPENEM LED BLONG TANK	Only the water committee can open the lid of the tank.
→TANK I OPEN LONG 6:30AM TO 8:00AM MO 4:00PM 6.30PM	The tank is open from 6:30-8:00 am and 4-6:30pm.
→WOTA BLONG KUK MO DRINK NOMO YU SWIM LONG HEM FIN 100 VATU	The water is only for cooking and drinking. If you wash in it – fine 100 vatu
→BLONG KAVA YU KASEM ONE TAEM NOMO	For kava, you can fill only once.
→KOMITI I MAS KAT MITING EVERI MANIS	The committee must have a meeting every month
→SAPOS WE YU WANTEM PUTUM NOTIS YU MAS PEM 20 VATU	If you want to put up a notice, you must pay 20 vatu.

**Figure 2: Text of public sign, Aserukh Village**

### **Private literacy practices**

Moving closer into the private lives of the Aulua speakers we will now examine what Aulua speakers read and write and what languages they do these activities in. We shall also investigate the ways Aulua speakers conceptualise reading and writing. Like most activities in this collectively orientated society, literacy practices are collaborative ventures. Aulua people outside of the school seldom read and write, and even less frequently practice these pursuits alone. We are lucky to have some excellent ethnographic material to contextualise our understanding of how Aulua speakers situate reading and writing in the work of Helen Tamtam (Masing) (Masing 1992; Baynham and Masing 2000; Tamtam 2004). As an insider and an academic interested in literacy she has investigated writing as a social practice in her

community. This section will draw on her observations as well as my own, conducted for the most part ten years after hers began. To begin, let us examine what kinds of texts might be found in an Aulua home. Masing (1992) gives us an indication of the amount and type of printed material available in the Lambulbatuei village which Crowley, (2000, p.76), in his overview of the language situation in Vanuatu, has tabulated.

**Table 1 : Distribution of books in Lambulbatuei Village according to language and content (from Crowley 2000, p. 67)**

	<i>Religious</i>	<i>Secular</i>
English	295	136
Bislama	160	25
Aulua	21	0

It is immediately apparent that vernacular texts, all of which are religious in nature, make up a very small part of the available reading material - nearing 4% of the text total. Moreover, Crowley, (2000, p.76) describes them as most likely being “old and fragile, with damaged spines, lost covers or torn or missing pages”. Looking after paper in the bamboo and palm-roofed houses in the humid Malakula is impossible. In fact, the number of texts in the homes in the Aulua locale might be much lower than Masing’s 1992 figure given the devastating effects of Cyclone Ivy in 2004. So not only are the Aulua language texts few, incomplete, and in an orthography which is hard to decipher, they are restricted to religious topics. Printed as they were by the departed missionaries, the most recent a reprint from the 1950s, there are no new vernacular texts entering the community.

Given that texts in all three languages exist in some households, we should examine how they are approached. Reading may not be conceptualised in quite the same way as middle class Western understandings, but Aulua reading practices would be recognisable elsewhere in Melanesia. Kulick and Stroud below comment on the literacy practices of Gapun villagers in the Lower Sepik, Papua New Guinea.

Only printed matter containing pictures or line drawings is ever really looked at. Nobody reads the Bible, for example, but school children or an adult and several school children, sometimes flick through it together and comment to each other about the abstract line drawings or figures they find there. This flicking through printed matter and explaining to one another about the pictures there is how most villagers most often ‘read’ such materials. (Kulick and Stroud, 1990 p.291)

This could be describing Aulua. English material seems the most readily available but the least accessible in terms of content. Not only are texts intended for first language speakers, but for the most part make reference to a world far different from that of

subsistence farmers in rural Vanuatu. Young Aulua speakers adopt one practice not seen in Gapun, inscribing their world onto the texts they investigate. From my own observations of my host siblings, reading these outsider texts involves not only co-narrating explanations of them, but writing themselves into them. Children write their names beneath pictures of people, and assign others' names to other subjects. Writing your name beneath some kind of object such as a car, house or food is a claim to ownership. Bislama texts are still interpreted jointly, and despite the fact that the children are able to 'read' these texts in the way that we would recognise the 'flicking and writing' approach is still favoured. Within my host family, I have never seen anyone ponder over the Aulua language text in the household.

Just as Aulua speakers interpret reading as a collaborative and communal meaning-making event, so is writing. From my observations in Lanvitvit village, I would calculate that fewer than ten percent of the post-school age residents would write with any frequency greater than once a month contra observations by Masing (1992) reported in Crowley (2000, p.67). Only those with roles at the co-operative store, in the church and village level committees would have recourse to writing on a regular basis. It is perhaps not co-incidental that roles in the religious, mercantile and local committees converge on the same participants. As proficiency in writing and knowledge of various genres is distributed unevenly across the population, writing to get things done requires the pooling of literacy (and the associated material) resources.

Tamtam has investigated how the work of writing is managed. Below is a transcription (with interlinear translations) of a writing event – the construction of a letter in Bislama requesting funding for a women's group project. Notice that the contributors suggest most of the content in Aulua (plain typeface), but make suggestions using the formulaic English (bold) they have and Bislama (italics):

R: *Ale*, **dear sir**

Okay, dear sir

H: mol wula si ren Bislama

Just write in Bislama

All: Avo

Yes

L: Ka! Wula ia amuntul sinte tiv te nesagtvogol

Well write it, some of you say something

R: **greeting**, uvtena mba. **Greeting** ambu

Greetings, say that! Just greetings

H: **greetings** si a? *Ale*

Greetings only? Okay

All: *Ale* las ni mbu

Yes that's right

S: **Greetings**

R: *I go long yufala evriwan long name blong papa*

To all you in the name of our father

H: Ahoo! **Greeting** *i go long nem blong masta nomo*

No! Greetings to you all in the name of the Master only

Others: Avo

Yes

(Baynham and Masing 2000, pp.197-198)

The authors note that the kinds of expertise required are distributed, though all participants give approval of what can go into the final product. In this excerpt we see that R has a general idea of how this particular kind of letter should begin, though its exact wording is disputed. H's experience as a town dweller and government employee well-versed in dominant literary practices and the languages associated with them, sees her amendments enthusiastically received.

In the second event, members of the Presbyterian Women Mothers' Union are writing a plan for various fund raising activities. This document, unlike the one above, remained within the Aulua community as a record of the proposed activities. Despite this local audience, the product was in Bislama. So this private, or in Wedin's term dominated literacy, event, we see the dominated language used to talk about the task but production is in the language of semi-dominant literacies.

L: Avo wulra go uvtena. Wula su ka Rebekah ia?

Yes write their names, then tell us. Have they been written, Rebekah?

R: Mel se wula timb.

We haven't written them yet.

E: Ka Rebekah u leva mbu u vene, a Leinasei imte nesagbokol

Bring it here Rebekah, Leinasei wants to say something.

L: Vavol nivtena go u wula (to Diana)

I will say it then you write it.

R: Ni linga mbav *asesten* bakani. Uvtena mbo , hen ti wula

I will leave it to the assistant chief, you say, then she will write it.

H: Mol ling tambaluk tah antil ker. *Mama ol olfala finis.*

Put down our young girls, the mothers are getting old.

(Tamtam 2004 p.58)

In this event there is less discussion of how to encode the message; rather the women focus on what their message should be (cf Wedin 2006). It seems also that the role of

scribe here is shared, as no-one feels that Bislama writing skills are concentrated in any one participant. This belief is not surprising given the ‘private’ development of Bislama skills, and the tolerance of variability in its spelling. The aims, then, of these two literacy events see different language choices being made and different competencies being called on. In both cases, we should note that the Aulua language was not absent, but as the language of discussion around the texts, it was deeply implicated in the creation of the products.

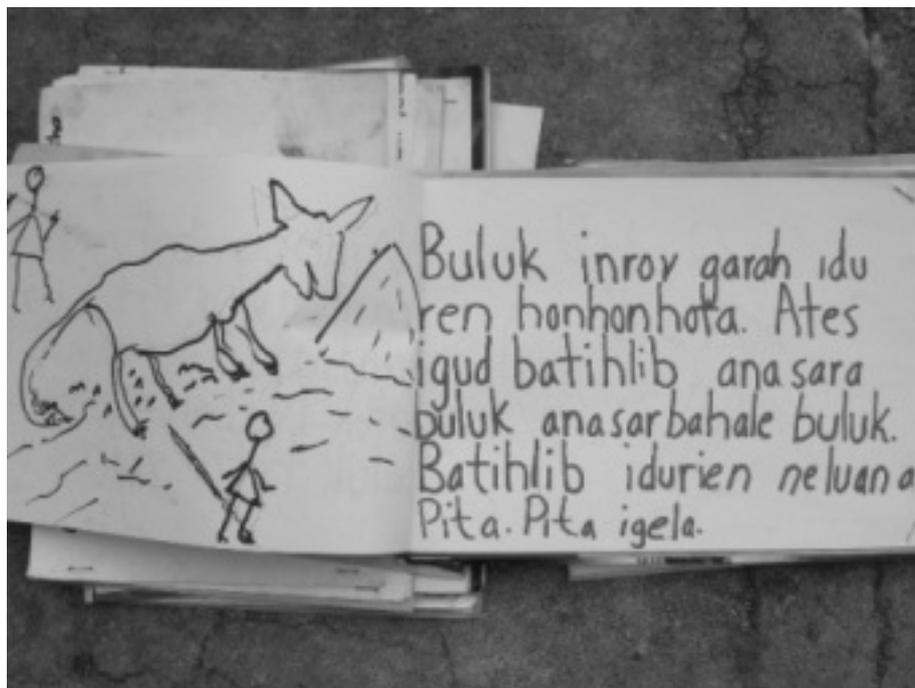
*Note:* Tamtam’s transcription of the interactions uses a personal, ad hoc orthography to record Aulua not the missionary one. In fact, it was Tamtam’s request for a new orthography, supported by the community that began my relationship with the Aulua community and language.

### **A new orthography and an old approach to literacy?**

Today only a few of the older generations have any kind of control of the old writing system which was of a clumsy design and contained graphemes for phonemes that no longer exist in the language orthography. It was also more phonetic than phonemic in representing the voiceless allophones of the stops in word final position. After presenting them with an array of possible writing systems, the ‘spelling’ committee decided on a ‘short style’ orthography which cut down the number of digraphs needed to write the language. The committee made a change to the original short style orthography, as they wished to retain <h> to represent the velar fricative (see discussion above) to which I, perhaps over-influenced by the IPA, had assigned <x>. Their choice was motivated by a desire to retain elements of the missionary writing system, as literacy is considered to be one of the original gifts given to the community by Leggatt and his followers.

The community’s intention with the orthography was to begin working towards implementing a vernacular education plan which would see Aulua become the language of instruction in the first year of schooling. To start the development of materials in the local language which reflects local culture, Tamtam, Kalite Wenjio, a representative from the Summer Institute of Linguistics literacy program, and I held a workshop attended by interested members of the community which included chiefs, parents, (vernacular) kindergarten teachers, and some young people. These members of the Aulua community produced fourteen hand-written and illustrated books in less than two days. These books constitute the first written texts produced by Aulua people in their own language. The stories they tell reflect local lives and interests, in sharp contrast to the religious texts from another place and time. (A fuller account of the achievement of a new orthography and the writing workshop can be found in Paviour-Smith, 2007).

**Photo 1** Pages from the book, *Nrisvarene ta a Ates tabav Pita*, written and illustrated by Chief Kalran Avong, Chief Bong Balel and Elda Donald Joshua



The text reads

“The cow ran up and stood on the hill. Ates took his knife and speared the cow, but missed. The knife stuck into Pita’s leg. Pita cried out.”

The workshop in 2005 was a success, and naively I thought the community was sufficiently enthused to continue working on writing and creating materials on their own. This has not been the case, and while the causes of this loss of impetus are numerous, I feel there are a number of difficulties in developing and fostering literacy practices in Aulua that have stemmed from not paying careful attention to the linguistic ecology and distribution of literacy in this locale.

### **Vernacular aspirations and dominant literacy practices**

The project targeted only educational literacy – a natural focus given the government’s Education Masterplan (Government of Republic of Vanuatu 2005) which espouses the hope of vernacular education in the first two years of schooling. It must be remembered that mother-tongue education was perceived as a bridge to education in the metropolitan languages which would go on and dominate the students’ educational life, but post-schooling, have little import. The role of vernaculars in schools is, in fact, to improve dominant literacy practices in the dominant languages. It is not clear then about the relationship between one or two years’ schooling in the vernacular and the development of literacy practices outside of the school. Perhaps this limited educational literacy would encourage local developments in the semi dominant and private literacy practices. It seems

likely, though, that limited literacy in Aulua would neither challenge nor replace the transference of literacy skills to Bislama.

There is also a time lag in results for this bottom-up approach to vernacular literacy focusing on the younger generation. Teaching the six year olds first means that it will be a long time before those literate in Aulua will be able to take up positions where literacy is needed or valued. Parents of class one students will be no more able to help their children's induction into education than under the current system where parents' English or French has long since been lost.

Further, in rural Aulua there is some ambivalence towards education. Many parents communicated to me a disconnect they felt between the curriculum of school and lived experience once education was over. The knowledge acquired in the high school has no function in the food gardens. With the high fees of high school education increasing the unavailability even for children who pass the primary school assessments, there is disenchantment with western education models. Not only is secondary education unobtainable, Aulua adults blame it for some of the emergent social problems in the villages. Students who return from the bigger villages and towns can be alienated from rural life, unwilling to participate in the rigors of gardening. Returning students have at times been seen as responsible for the introduction of alcohol. All these discourses may be partly responsible for the poor attendance rates and concomitant poor achievement rates of primary school, not just unfamiliarity with the languages of the classroom.

Neither the school nor education is seen as being at the heart of the community. It is *vit Aulua*, 'down there in Aulua Bay', between villages. The teachers live on site, not in the villages and rarely have family links. They are separated linguistically – they speak other vernaculars, are speakers of the metropolitan languages, and are educated wage earners. These differences allow the Aulua community to separate the school both physically and conceptually from the village sphere. I suggest that this ethnography of literacy points to problems in educational literacy goals in this setting. The language of private literacy will not and is not intended to challenge the languages of the educational institution. Its goal according to the masterplan is to support the pre-existing language choices of dominant literacy practices. Whether or not this in turn influences semi-dominant and private literacy practices is not part of the goals of the vernacular education movement. A more fruitful approach would be increasing the types of semi-dominant literacy activities in the vernacular. Targeting activities in which larger numbers and a wider cross section of the community participate alongside the vernacular education program will improve the impetus of vernacular literacy. If Aulua language was promoted as the obvious choice for textual mediation between local institutions the church, the co-operative store, and the water committee, then it may displace the current default setting of Bislama in these domains.

## **Adding the vernacular to semi-dominant practices**

What is close to the Aulua speakers' hearts is the church. The Presbyterian Church is an organising feature of the community. The churches are full (by mid-service) most Sundays. It is here that community events are conceived, organised and advertised. From my most recent fieldtrips it seems that the post-sermon messages on Sundays are now beginning to replace the secular Monday *morning toktok*, the village meeting organised on behalf of the village chiefs.

As we saw, Aulua already has a role in church. While restricted to certain hymns, prayers and messages, it is already there alongside Bislama (and English). Moreover, there is a tradition of religious literacy, with scraps of a hymnal, New Testament translations, and a catechism making up Tamtam's (1992) books. Given that the church is the centre of village life and already affords a role to Aulua language, it would seem sensible to add a vernacular literacy program to this niche of the literacy ecology. In this way, a wide cross-section of the community can simultaneously acquire and practice literacy in a setting that is deeply meaningful for them. Members of the different age-bands can assist each other. Support for school-based literacy could easily be added to the well attended Sunday Schools.

Informally the (re)vernacularisation of worship has already begun as the result of the new orthography. One family requested I help them transcribe their translations of thirty choruses into the orthography. Subsequently they distributed copies through the Lambulbateui church. Members of the same family also worked on updating and retranslating Missi (missionary) Trudinger's 1950s typescript of the Book of Jonah. These efforts have been the side projects to the main thrust of my task of documenting the grammar, and alongside this proposal to focus on the church raise some ethical dilemmas for me in this community and research context.

Creating religious texts is not strictly within the purview of the project funding agency. While linguists researching in Vanuatu are required to contribute to the (linguistic) aspirations of the community they are interacting with, as a secular academic researcher and linguist I do not feel qualified to undertake the role of assisting in the interpreting of religious texts. This expertise lies with organisations such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The issue, though, is more than money and expertise. Should the community refocus their aspiration for vernacular literacy to the religious setting, there is a danger of returning reading and writing in Aulua to the niche it inhabited in the earlier period of the missionaries. When missionaries and their indigenous assistants began the translations literacy was a one way affair. They produced the texts and devised education largely to achieve the goal of decoding them. There is little evidence that literacy was practiced for anything other than religious purposes. Nothing suggests Aulua speakers transferred these literacy skills to private contexts. If this had been the case, the older generations who were educated under the missionaries might have retained this practice, but when presented with missionary texts they had no fluency in their decoding. They also showed a

preference for writing in Bislama. It seems, then, that the initial period of literacy did not produce private literacy events.

Returning Aulua literacy to the church is an excellent outcome but it must be done in a way that will avoid creating the same effect. It would be no step forward if semi-dominant literacy practices meant the recreation of an elite literate in Aulua controlling the production of texts. A new Aulua religious literacy would also need to challenge the dominance of Bislama as the language of private literacy. Fostering a collaborative approach of writing in Aulua such as Masing (1992, 2004) has already documented for Bislama, and which worked well to produce the reading books in the workshop, could put the production of religious material, hymns, prayers, translations etc into the hands of the community, creating a more evenly distributed Aulua literacy.

## **Conclusion**

Surveying the literacy landscape of Aulua, it seems clear that a single approach to increasing vernacular literacy has not been exceptionally productive. The impetus for school-based vernacular literacy has been slow because it does not inhabit a niche in the heart of the community. Physically removed from the villages, the school is perceived as an institution outside of Aulua. Its teachers are not local, and its aims are perhaps not aligned to life in rural Malakula. For these reasons, creating a limited niche for the local language in a supporting role to the current dominant literacy practices of the school is unlikely to dramatically reorient semi-dominant literacy events in the villages towards the vernacular. Adding Aulua literacy to another niche in the local language ecology – namely the church – expanding its role from the sidelines of dominated literacy practices will allow a large proportion of the population to engage in vernacular literacy together and in a context felt to be central to the community. There are dangers to reviving religious literacy, however. It would be unfortunate to reproduce the literacy practices of missionary times when a literate religious elite produced (translated) texts for consumption. By utilising or continuing to encourage collaborative production of texts and a communal reading and singing of them Aulua speakers might ensure that a literate elite akin to the mission days will not reappear. Instead, the community, clearly comfortable with this group approach to reading and writing, will be more likely to adopt vernacular literacy as a corporate unit. Religious texts produced by the community for the community, like the stories already created at the school workshop, are far more likely to reflect local norms and practices compared to those created by the missionaries. At the very least introducing vernacular literacy at a second site, apportioning some semi-dominant literacy practices to Aulua, will mean that the language will gain another niche in the ecology. A broader base of the population will be exposed to Aulua literacy and the elevation in prestige of the vernacular will increase the chances of speakers reading and writing Aulua in genres currently dominated by Bislama.

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# **“I HAVE BEEN DOING THINGS THIS WAY FOR SO MANY YEARS; WHY SHOULD I CHANGE?” EXPLORING TEACHERS’ RESISTANCE TO PROFESSIONAL LEARNING.**

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## **Abstract**

*Continuing professional development (CPD) for educators is essential to raise student achievement as the single most important action that can be taken to improve student performance is to strengthen teaching. While successful, high quality CPD is dependent on various factors including organizational support and the availability of teacher learning opportunities, the attitudes of teachers towards CPD also appears to be crucial. Based on interviews with 30 non native teachers of English, this paper outlines teachers’ views of professional development and the activities they engage in to learn and improve their craft. Findings showed that in this context, only a few teachers recognised the need for CPD. However, they too lacked the knowledge of how to change. The large majority of teachers did not give importance to CPD and felt little need to engage in learning. The reasons for teachers’ lack of interest in their own CPD are explored.*

## **Introduction**

One hot lazy afternoon, I was sitting at the back of a classroom observing a teacher who had, several years previously, also taught me. I watched as he taught the same lesson from the same textbook in the same way that I remembered him doing when I was a student in his class. Discussing the lesson afterwards with the teacher, he told me how, through using the same lessons repeatedly, teaching had become almost automated for him; how he did not believe in applying ‘Western’ ideas about education into his teaching because he felt that they would be unworkable in his classroom. While the lesson seemed to satisfy the teacher’s objectives and the students had appeared engaged, it caused me to question a teacher’s ability and desire to change. Do teachers continue to teach the way they have always done? Do they recycle their trusted repertoire of lessons time and time again? Do they adapt, evolve and grow in the course of their teaching careers? Are they interested in developing their skills and knowledge as a teacher? Do teachers change?

This paper presents a study that grew out of these initial questions. Focusing on English language teachers in the Maldives, it discusses the extent to which teachers

learn during the course of their career, and are interested in improving their practices as a result of professional development activities.

## Literature Review

### Teacher Learning

Teachers can engage in learning in a number of formal and informal ways (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999; Richards & Farrell, 2005). First, they gain new knowledge and understanding of their students, schools, curriculum, and instructional methods through their own practice. This may include conscious, planned learning strategies such as self-monitoring, action research, and reflective journals; or learning may arise unconsciously as a result of everyday experiences. Learning also occurs through interactions between teachers. This may include formal mentoring schemes, informal conversations in the staffroom, peer collaborations such as peer coaching, action research and team teaching. Teachers also learn through formal teacher development programmes including teacher support/study groups, working with a teacher education consultant, and workshops organised by the teaching institution. Many practising teachers also engage in learning through graduate programmes at universities. Finally, Bransford et al. note that teachers also learn about teaching in ways divorced from the professional environment, for instance through their roles as parents or coaches and involvement in youth-related community activities.

Teachers who engage in learning do so for different reasons, and the resulting experiences are likely to be independently defined. Constructivist learning theory suggests that learning is an individual process of knowledge construction and building, with each individual learning different things in different ways even when provided with similar learning experiences (Williams & Burden, 1997).

Crookes (1997) asserts that in many countries, school cultures are not conducive to the concept of teacher learning. Schools are “*not* seen as sites of knowledge creation, they are *not* learning organisations, and teachers are *not* supported in professional development activities that will truly result in professional development” (p. 71).

He argues that most school systems see teachers as all-knowing, with a strong hierarchical relationship between student and teacher and a conception of knowledge as “out there” independent of social conditions and arising apparently independent of the power relations within society. Teachers are constructed into this model of teaching and knowing – a model which they are unlikely to move out of by themselves. In such contexts, the notion of teacher as learner is likely to be a challenging one as many would regard it as a threat to the teacher’s expertise.

## **Teacher Change**

Freeman (1989) identifies four features of teacher change. First, he notes that change does not exclusively imply that something is done differently, but may in fact refer simply to a change in awareness. Second, change may not occur immediately, or completely. In fact, change often occurs gradually, and over time. Third, change may or may not be directly observable or quantifiable. If, for example, a teacher has adopted a range of different techniques of error correction, these different techniques can be observed and quantified. However, it will be less possible to directly observe whether this behavioural change corresponds to an internal shift in the teacher's attitude to error correction. Finally, Freeman points out that while some types of change may lead to closure, other types are open ended and lead to increasing experimentation, and thereby encourage further change.

## **Resistance to Change**

However well designed or carefully executed a teacher development programme may be, teachers may not change their beliefs or practices. As Fullan (1998) contends, there is no panacea or model of change, because as individuals and contexts differ, there can be no certainty of success. Despite the best efforts at planning, there is often a significant difference between what is proposed in a teacher development programme and what is subsequently evidenced in the classroom (Breen, Candlin, Dam, & Gabrielsen, 1989; Palmer, 1993; Lamb, 1995; Pacek, 1996; Markee, 1997). This is often due to the various practical constraints that stand in the way of innovation. These include environment and school culture, the availability of time and resources, peer pressure to conform, etc.

Apart from the practical constraints that thwart change efforts, teachers themselves are often regarded as being impediments to change. As Lamie (2002; 2004) found, it is not a question of teachers' inability to change, but a lack of self confidence and self worth that impedes some teachers in facing change. A lack of adequate information available to teachers regarding the innovation can also hinder change efforts, as can negative attitudes towards issues involved in the innovation.

Roberts (1998) views the lack of change in teachers not as resistance to change, but as the filtering out of the innovation. He argues that a constructivist view of learning suggests that teachers – and especially experienced teachers – make sense of professional learning by interpreting input in such a way that it fits into their existing framework of theories about teaching and learning that have been established through prior experience. This is not the same as misinterpreting input, says Roberts. Rather, it is an assimilation of new input to conform to the patterns of existing knowledge and beliefs that have become established and are central to their understanding of themselves. He argues that teachers often fail to see that they are still following their previous methods of teaching because they believe that they are adopting a new instructional method. Roberts suggests that uncovering teachers' implicit theories and relating them to the new learning can help minimise such processes of assimilation.

## Context of the Study

With the objective of exploring teachers' views of professional learning and growth, I interviewed 30 non native teachers of English from three secondary schools in the Maldives. All three schools followed the same National Curriculum, taught all school subjects through the medium of English, and their students sat for the same international examination at the end of the tenth grade (International General Certificate of Secondary Education, offered by Cambridge International Examinations). However, the three schools were very different from one another, not only in terms of geographical location and the socio-economic background of their students, but also in terms of their visions and goals.

Rural School<sup>i</sup> had a student population of 750 at the time of data collection. It was owned and funded by the government and was located on an island that was home to around 7500 inhabitants. In this school, students were often very passive, and were reluctant to use English in responding to teachers' questions. Teaching, as a result, was often very teacher-directed.

Urban School and Elite School were both located in Malé, the capital island of the country. Urban School, with a student population of around 1900 at the time of data collection, was privately owned and mainly funded through student fees. Its students comprised drop-outs from the larger government schools in Malé or students from other islands who had migrated to the capital. Teachers in this school were more concerned with behaviour management and class control rather than the content and quality of the actual teaching. Students were often uninterested in learning.

Elite School was one of the oldest schools in the country, and catered to over 2100 students at the time of data collection. This large, overcrowded government school was often looked up to as the yardstick by which the performance of other schools was measured. Although classes consisted of mixed ability students, students were generally interested in learning, and many contributed to class discussions. Compared with Rural and Urban Schools, students at Elite School were generally confident in their use of English, and performed significantly better in their examinations.

At the time of data collection, organised in-service training was not common in the Maldives. Teachers were not required to be involved in professional development activities, and the geographical nature of the archipelago made travelling between islands to attend teacher development workshops very costly. When workshops were organised, they would generally take place on the capital island, and would be held for one to two days. Follow-up visits to schools by the trainers in the workshops were not held, usually due to time and financial constraints.

## **Methodology**

I interviewed 30 teachers from the three schools – ten from each school. They were all non native teachers of English. Each teacher was interviewed twice – with a three month interval in between interviews. The interviews, lasting usually about half an hour each, included an exploration of the teacher’s own background of language learning and teaching, their beliefs about teaching and their attitude towards change and teacher development. The main guiding questions asked during the interviews were often followed up with further questions/discussion, based on the responses received. The interviews in Rural School took place during the second term of the academic year (April – July); interviews in the other two schools took place during the third term (July – October). The interviews took place in school, during school hours, at a time that was convenient to the teachers concerned. They were audio recorded, with the consent of the teachers, and took place in a separate, closed room in the school, away from other staff and students. The interviews were then broadly transcribed, coded and analysed to identify broad themes in the data.

Of the 30 teachers interviewed, 20 were Indian. There were six teachers from Sri Lanka and two each from Pakistan and the Maldives. There were an equal number of teachers of each gender (15). While most of the teachers did have a teaching certificate/diploma, only five had studied English Language Teaching, Applied Linguistics, TESOL or a similar subject specifically concerned with teaching second languages. Their length of teaching experience ranged between zero and 44 years. (Appendix A gives further details of all thirty teachers).

## **Findings**

In the initial interviews I asked all teachers to describe ways in which they attempted to reflect on their teaching, improve and develop themselves as teachers. Teachers’ responses to the question showed that continuous professional development (CPD) was a foreign concept to most, as many teachers did not regard teacher learning to be an important issue. Although some teachers claimed that it was necessary to improve oneself as a teacher and keep on learning to improve professionally, most failed to either make time for it, or more commonly, were not aware of ways in which such development could be brought about.

A summary of the main responses to the interview questions are presented here, under the main themes identified in the data. Direct quotes from teachers’ interview responses are used to illustrate each point.

### **No desire to improve**

Asked about what they did to learn more and improve their teaching, seven of the teachers interviewed (25%) stated that they had no desire to improve or change in any way. Elma, who was then in her second year of teaching English, responded that “there is not much to develop.” She couldn’t think of anything that she wanted to

learn more about and was not aware of anything she needed to do to improve her teaching:

I don't think I need to improve. My students like me very much. My goal is to help them pass their exam. If I can ... achieve that, I don't think I need to ... change or ... improve.

Experienced teachers often claimed that there was nothing left for them to learn more about. For example, Hamd, who had been teaching for more than 32 years, claimed that he was “not really that interested” in seeking professional development opportunities.

I don't bother with things like that too much. I think I have now learnt all there is to learn about teaching.

Similarly, Nur too felt that professional learning was not something that applied to an experienced teacher like himself. He felt that since he was “not a new teacher anymore” he did not feel the need to engage in more learning. He recalled that as a novice teacher he had “read books and gathered ideas” but that at the current stage of his career, he felt that he had “learnt what there is to know about teaching.” When I asked him about whether he kept up to date with current methods and trends, Idris exclaimed:

Teaching is teaching, no? Whether it is done today or yesterday or fifty years ago, teaching is teaching. So I don't think we need to think of any new ways or anything like that. ... And now of course I am old and feeble. Why would I want to learn anything new now?

Several teachers commented that they had confidence in themselves that they were good teachers and therefore did not feel that they needed any more training. Bakur, for example, had no desire to learn anything new or change in any way since he was ready to retire soon. He stated that: “I know that I know enough ... I don't need to improve” – such resistance to learning was echoed in the responses of many teachers.

### **Lack of opportunities for development**

Those teachers who felt that it was necessary to be involved in regular professional development activities recognised that such opportunities were lacking in their teaching context. Most teachers explained that the opportunities to develop or the facilities to improve were not available. Teachers recalled that in previous teaching contexts they had been mandated to attend various workshops and in-service days, but that in Maldives, in-service development was not a common feature at the time and therefore such options did not usually exist.

Some teachers, such as Rilwan, noted that their lack of interest to be involved in professional development workshops was due to the fact that they had little to gain from these experiences.

At the end of a workshop what have we gained? Usually nothing new in terms of teaching ideas. Its always the same things that they talk about.

And there isn't even a certificate of participation that is offered. So in the end we gain nothing.

### **Focus on reading**

Due to the lack of organised professional development programmes, many teachers noted that they attempted to keep up to date with new developments in the field through reading.

Reading was identified by eight teachers (40%) as being the main way in which they attempted to learn professionally. Their choice of reading matter, however, differed. Some noted that they read (fiction and non fiction) to improve their own English language, while others claimed that they read teachers' guides and focused on things such as how to mark examinations and how to write essays. Dalal explained that he improved himself by "reading model essays in essay writing textbooks and [by] reading examiners' reports and marking schemes to see how they have awarded marks."

### **Past experiences of professional development**

Gul noted that she had attended various workshops "conducted by many British people" when she was in her native country, but that "no such facilities" were available in their current teaching context. She explained that she kept "a file of everything – all lesson plans, tests, handouts prepared" from previous years when she used to teach in a very reputable school in her home country. Most of these had been "prepared by experts" who had conducted in-service workshops in the school. She recycled these lessons and handouts when she needed a change from the textbook she had to follow. Gul did not see the need to add to her repertoire of teaching strategies, but felt that this collection of resources she had was adequate for her, whatever teaching situation she was in.

If I want to do something different I can use some exercises from it. It's all there. I can just get it photocopied and teach it. It's easy when I am feeling lazy and haven't done any preparation for a lesson.

Adila too noted that she had in the past attended teacher development workshops, and had tried to adopt some of the techniques they introduced. But, she stated that it was difficult to "change to something new" because "we are so used to doing things in a particular way." She emphasised the need to make small, gradual changes:

we can't just start new methods, we have to also have some time to think and learn to do it [or] the students will also get confused, so we have to go slowly slowly only. That way only we can try new methods. ... And even then it's very difficult ... not knowing if what I am doing is right or helping them.

Idris recounted that he had attended several in-service days in the past, which he described as "one or two day affairs with special lectures ... to bring us up to date". I asked him if he had found these in-service days to be useful.

So far as keeping up to date is concerned, yes. We were told about so many different new things and trends ... But that was just information, I

think, because there was very little guidance on what to actually do in the classroom... It's one thing to be told this is the new way to do something. ... But you have so many questions and so many problems when you start to try them in your own classes. So it was very difficult.

Idris further added that he had not adopted any new techniques as a result of such in-service sessions, and in fact had not enjoyed most of the sessions he had attended in the past. He said he reflected on his teaching by “thinking back to [his] own days as a student and trying to remember how [he] used to do things [at the time]”.

### **Awareness of own resistance**

Some of the teachers, like Dalal, recognized that they were reluctant to change. Dalal stated that he always followed his own methods and did what he believed was best rather than follow someone else's footsteps:

the problem is that I think I am rather [reluctant] to follow others. I always have my own way and I will never give in to other people. Nobody has managed to change me so far. I'm not the kind of person to do something just because someone tells me to do it. In fact that's probably a reason why I will not do it... now if I come across someone whom I think I [will] learn from I might listen to their ideas, but I will most probably not try them out. Because the problem is in me. I am who I am... no one can change me.

Bakur also claimed that he was resistant to change:

Sometimes I feel [that] I can't modify just myself however much I try. I cannot adapt myself to something. I cannot change my ways. But then, I have been doing things this way for so many years, why should I change?

### **Awareness of need for own learning**

A few of the teachers (15%) alluded to the need to continually learn and improve their knowledge. Mika, for example, described how his attitudes towards learning and development changed over the years:

When I finished my training I felt like I knew enough about teaching. I was a teacher. Teachers are supposed to know everything, right? And I didn't make any effort to improve ... Then after a few years I started reading again. ... I found that the more I read new things ... the more I realised how much there is to learn. How little I really knew.

Unlike most other teachers interviewed, Liban appeared to be eager to learn and improve himself as a teacher. He believed in the need to “renew and recharge the professional batteries ... every now and then” and explained that he did so mostly through reading and discussions with other like-minded teachers.

Fazla too, found that talking to other teachers and exchanging ideas was very helpful for her own development as a teacher:

I like talking to senior teachers who are more experienced than me. Especially here in school I like talking to Bakur Sir [since] he is much more experienced than me ... I like to talk to him about the lessons and about language in general because he is very knowledgeable. ... And sometimes I like to compare with other teachers what they have done in their class and ... try their ideas to see how it works for me.

### **Unsupportive school environment**

Those teachers that recognised the need for teacher development also commented on the lack of support received from the school to encourage change. Liban explained that trying to be a modern, innovative teacher was no easy feat when he worked in an environment that was not conducive to improvement.

Nobody comes to supervise us or observe us or give us any feedback on our teaching. So I don't really know what areas I need to improve. ... I have been teaching here for almost four years now and so far I have been observed only once and that too for less than 15 minutes. I didn't even get any feedback.

Jana also noted the lack of teacher appraisal in her school. She added that since she was not a trained teacher and had had very little experience of teaching English so far, she was keen to find out how well she was teaching, but because teachers were not observed and discussions between teachers did not move beyond "making a list of things to teach in the next fortnight", she had little chance of learning more about teaching through other teachers. Jana explained that she enjoyed trying out new ideas in her teaching and adopted new techniques as a result of experimenting through trial and error.

The need for change efforts to be mandated by the school management was also identified by a few teachers. Fazla noted that she was reluctant to bring about changes in her teaching when change had not been required by the school. If the school expected teachers to continually change their practices, the school management should lead the change and make it mandatory, she claimed.

### **Financial constraints**

Some of the teachers explained that they simply had no time for professional development activities. This was either because they were so involved with the school's extra curricular activities, or because they had other teaching jobs, outside school. Almost all the teachers worked as private tutors after school hours, and some worked in more than one school. This made it difficult to find time or inclination to focus on professional development.

Mika recalled that he had first started attending in-service workshops with much enthusiasm, but soon found "workshops that claimed to improve ... teaching [were] quite useless ... and not applicable to [his] teaching situations". It was partly because

of this, he explained, that he lost interest in learning and was no longer interested in improving himself, but was “more concerned about making money”. He taught in two schools, gave private tuition to individual students after hours and at weekends, he taught at a private language teaching institution. This left him with no time to be involved in anything else.

I don't have time to spend on planning and thinking about various types of techniques and approaches and what the current trends are and all that. I like to do something that is simple and straight forward. Go into the class, explain the lesson and go out. That is what I always do. My rule is that I will only think of teaching when I am in the school. I am not going to think about teaching once I leave the school gate. I will not spend extra time here because I have to earn money and that is my main purpose. Whether I stay here for the session time or whether I come back and mark books or do something else in my extra time, I will get the same amount of money at the end of the month. Whether I do something from the textbook or whether I spend hours dreaming up exciting lessons, I will get the same amount of money. So why should I bother? Why should I spend any more time and effort than is absolutely necessary?

### **Fear of failure**

Many of the teachers described a lack of desire and hesitancy to try new techniques due to their fear that the new techniques will fail. Mika described how he had been impressed by the timelines used by a fellow teacher to teach tenses. However, he explained that he was afraid to use the technique himself:

in case I don't do it the right way and I end up making my students even more confused and make a fool of myself in the process.

Asif explained that trying out new techniques left him feeling very nervous.

When I do something new, I am always on an edge. I don't know if it will work. I keep referring to my notes more often, and I know my students can feel that I am unsure of myself. I don't want that. I want my students to feel that I know what I am doing; I know what I am talking about.

Cala was open to new ideas, but was aware of her shortcomings in trying them out in the classroom:

When it comes to actually trying new ideas with my students, I find that if I really like something I might try it. But if it doesn't work for me once, I will not bother with it again. I don't have much patience like that.

For teachers like Sharmila, “maintaining class control” mattered the most. No action, such as introducing new techniques, would be taken if there was a possibility that the new activity may cause some kind of “upheaval that would lead to the teacher losing control of the class.”

Mika felt that teacher educators suggested techniques that were impractical and unrealistic. He explained that during his training, when he was introduced to the Communicative Approach, he had been sceptical of its practicality, and had asked his trainers if it was something that could really be applied in the classroom.

When we were training we were told you must get the students to speak and tell stories and all that but in the real classroom how can we do that? ... I don't have all the facilities or the energy to do all this communicative approach nonsense. I don't believe in teaching in that way. ... I always asked [my trainers] are these techniques that we can really apply in our classroom and they will say why don't you try it in the class and see. Even they know we can't do it. So why should we try it in the class if we are going to make a fool of ourselves in front of the students?

The responses received from the 30 teachers can be summarised in Table 1, to illustrate the extent to which these teachers were open to change and interested in developing themselves. These results will be discussed in relation to the literature in the next section.

## **Discussion**

### **Negative attitudes to CPD**

Close to half of the teachers involved in the study did not have positive attitudes towards teachers' CPD. Teachers who believed in the sufficiency of their knowledge for teaching were generally unreceptive to new input and were disinterested in adopting change. Various personality and situational factors also appeared to affect the degree of openness to change. Adila explained that after graduating from university, she had decided to take up teaching because it was "an easy job suitable for a lady [with the added bonus of] a lot of holidays", indicating that rather than a passion for the profession, it was the (in her view) undemanding nature of the job that attracted her to teaching. In such cases, it can be assumed that the teacher will avoid teaching situations which would demand more effort and take up more of her time.

**Table 1: Summary of teachers' attitudes to change and professional development**

<i>Teachers' attitudes</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Details</i>
Did not want to improve/ change	7	23%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident about own ability</li> <li>• Did not recognise any weaknesses</li> <li>• Equated experience with expertise</li> <li>• Did not want to trial others' ideas</li> <li>• Feared change</li> </ul>
Read for self development	8	27%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiction to improve own language</li> <li>• Self-help language development books</li> <li>• Marking schemes</li> <li>• Examiners' reports</li> <li>• Recent works on language teaching methodology</li> </ul>
Interested in development, but did little to improve	2	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognised importance of CPD</li> <li>• Did nothing to self develop</li> <li>• Feared change</li> <li>• Lack of organised professional development</li> </ul>
Eager to learn more and improve	3	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognised importance of CPD</li> <li>• Read widely</li> <li>• Aware of own weaknesses</li> <li>• Trialled new ideas</li> <li>• Valued others' expertise</li> </ul>

With regard to situational factors, time, workload and support from the school leaders appeared to be important. There was also evidence that a teacher's level of confidence, willingness to take risks and readiness to collaborate affected the extent to which they were willing to engage in professional development activities. A teacher's age and career stage, and more specifically her status or position in the school may also have some impact on her attitudes to change and whether she implements the proposed change. The study showed that while novice teachers felt that it was too soon to start learning again, experienced teachers felt that it was too late in the day for them to learn new things. Teachers who expressed an interest in CPD were neither novice nor too experienced, with an average of seven years of experience in the field. It appears therefore that there may be a correlation between the length of a teacher's experience and their openness to change. Further research would be necessary to validate this suggestion.

Teachers need to see the relationship between teaching and learning. The majority of teachers in this study were dissatisfied with the level of learning and student achievement in their schools. However, they attributed the low level of student achievement to external factors such as parents' language abilities and the lack of

exposure to the language outside the school. They did not acknowledge that even if these factors did play a part in the process, changing their own teaching would make a direct impact on the students' learning.

### **Lack of procedural knowledge of CPD**

It was also clear from this study that even when teachers had been open to learning and saw the value in adopting change, they lacked the procedural knowledge about how to change, and what they could do to improve their teaching. This lack of knowledge had hindered change efforts in the past.

Teachers who reported that they read as a form of self development, appeared to give more importance to developing their own language competence (such as expanding their vocabulary, improving their pronunciation and fine tuning their grammar through self-help books) rather than their teaching skills. One reason why this was so may be due to the lack of access to resources such as professional journals, and recent methodology titles.

Those teachers who did read about new developments in the education field, and particularly with regard to L2 instruction, did not always change their classroom practices accordingly. This may be because of a fear of change, in case of failure in front of their students. As Lamie (2002; 2004) found, teachers' lack of self confidence was a major factor that affected change. It may also to some extent relate to Roberts' (1998) claim that teachers simply assimilated any new input into their existing framework of theories, and therefore did not see the need to change either their implicit theories or their actual teaching, because they did not see any distinction between new input and their own practices.

### **Culture not conducive to change**

The lack of support from school leaders to be involved in continual development was an important factor that negatively affected teachers' openness to change. None of the three schools had a systematic scheme for teacher observation and appraisal. This led to a lack of focus on the quality of teaching and continual improvement. Teachers received no feedback on their teaching and therefore were often unaware of their own inadequacies as teachers. Also, the dire need for teachers meant that once appointed, teachers were rarely made redundant. Thus there was little incentive for the less motivated teachers to go the extra mile. This would to some extent explain why teachers claimed to believe that a communicative approach which encourages learners to be active participants in the learning process is the ideal way to teach a L2, yet failed to put this ideal into practice because such an approach entails far more work for the teacher.

The findings indicate that teachers in this context did not value each other's expertise and did not seek to learn from each other. Expertise was seen to rest with native speaking teachers and teacher trainers, with many teachers involved in the study making references to this. For example, Bakur was regarded by most of his colleagues as an exceptional and knowledgeable teacher because he had previously

taught in Europe, with some of his students including native English speakers. Furthermore, there was a general reluctance to share ideas and learn from each others' experiences. Peer collaboration was very much lacking in all three schools involved in the study. This suggests the need to inculcate in teachers the value of their own knowledge and experience; that expertise lies not only with native speaking teachers and trainers. The value of teacher collaborations and peer support needs to be acknowledged and emphasised.

The three schools involved in this study reflect the kind of schools that Crookes (1997) described. Teachers were treated as all-knowing beings (in fact, Bina claimed that teachers should be treated as Gods and their expertise should not be questioned by students or parents) and the notion of teacher as learner was an alien one in all three school communities.

### **Level of motivation**

The extent to which teachers were motivated to teach well and improve themselves figures strongly when considering factors that affect teacher development. Jana and Komal were noticeably more passionate about their work than the other teachers. Dissatisfied with using only the textbook activities, both these teachers would occasionally use other materials, with individual photocopies made for students at the teachers' own expense. Because the school library did not have adequate resources, Jana would lend interested students some of her own books because she wanted to inspire them and develop in them a love for reading. Actions such as these suggested that teachers, who were more enthusiastic about their work, were more likely to attempt to teach in the way they feel would be the most beneficial.

Almost all of the teachers interviewed explained that they had taken up their current teaching positions due to financial reasons. Gul, for example, stated that the purpose of coming to Maldives was to earn enough money to be able to send her son to medical school in the USA – savings she would not have been able to make working in her previous position in her native country. Some teachers explained that they chose to come to Maldives as the first step towards gaining international experience – a stepping stone for gaining job opportunities further afield. Most of these teachers had left their families behind and had arrived in Maldives on their own. They typically lived in rented bedsits, often shared with other teachers. Almost all of them had at least one other teaching post. Some of the teachers like Mika were juggling three teaching positions in three different institutions as well as offering private tutoring, which meant teaching “from morning till midnight, seven days a week”.

Considering these factors, it is understandable that some teachers choose to opt for the easiest possible way. This relates to what Crookes (1997) refers to as the psychological separation between teachers as human beings and teachers in their working environments. When teachers have to “work in conditions in which they cannot maintain professional standards, and are unable to derive ... satisfaction and opportunities for personal growth” (p.74), it is hardly surprising that their professional practice is not at the optimum; and that for these teachers, survival rather

than pedagogic concerns are the priority. When teachers do have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities, their reasons for being involved in such activities may be different (for example, due to an awards of certification or credit towards a formal education programme, or simply because of a desire to learn more about a particular topic) and therefore the resulting experiences are likely to be independently defined, as described by Williams and Burden (1997).

### **Open to change**

The few teachers who were open to change were aware of the need to improve themselves if their students are to fully benefit, and were able to state what their weaknesses were. They placed great value in utilising other teachers' expertise, either through professional discussions and, more importantly, by trialling each other's ideas. These teachers placed great importance on teacher growth and emphasised the need to keep up to date with new trends through reading a variety of published literature.

### **Conclusion**

Going back to the initial questions that guided the study, it can be seen that almost half of the teachers in the study did continue to teach the same way that they had always done, recycling their trusted repertoire of lessons time and time again, reluctant to incorporate change, and resistant to the idea of new learning and growth. Those who do recognise the need for new learning are unaware of the range of ways in which such learning can occur. Just as learners need to be shown ways in which they can become better learners through developing their study skills and utilising learning strategies that reflect their learning styles, teachers too need to be made aware of ways in which they can become better teachers. Teacher development does not need to involve professional workshops, but can occur individually through self reflection, or through collaboration with other teachers. Teachers need to be made aware of the options they have and a culture that values CPD needs to be inculcated. Teachers' practices and beliefs must become the object of reflection and scrutiny so as to engage in a process of continual improvement. Just as a kaleidoscope held to the light can show a new dimension of a geometric pattern, teachers must reflect on their practice to see new understandings of their craft. Through these new understandings, teachers will recognise patterns of behaviour, and prepare themselves for changes at the next turn.

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<sup>i</sup> Names of schools and teachers have been changed to maintain anonymity.

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## Appendix A

### Participants

	Name	Gender	Highest Qualification	Teach Q	ELT Q	Yrs of Exp	Ethnicity	School
1	Adila	Female	BA in Education	Yes	No	22	Indian	Rural
2	Bakur	Male	BA in Literature	No	No	15	Indian	Rural
3	Cala	Female	MA in English	Yes	No	13	Indian	Rural
4	Dalal	Male	LLB in Law	Yes	Yes	4	Srilankan	Rural
5	Elma	Female	BA in History	No	No	2	Maldivian	Rural
6	Fazla	Female	MA in English	Yes	No	4	Indian	Rural
7	Gul	Female	MA in Literature	Yes	No	22	Indian	Rural
8	Hamd	Male	BA in Education	Yes	No	32	Indian	Urban
9	Idris	Male	Certificate in Teaching	Yes	No	44	Srilankan	Urban
10	Jana	Female	Dip. in Business Admin.	No	No	23	Srilankan	Urban
11	Komal	Female	Dip. in English	Yes	No	37	Srilankan	Urban
12	Liban	Male	Dip. in English	Yes	Yes	14	Srilankan	Urban
13	Mika	Male	Certificate in ELT	Yes	Yes	13	Srilankan	Urban
14	Nur	Male	BA in Literature	Yes	No	25	Indian	Urban
15	Omar	Male	MA in Literature	No	No	13	Indian	Elite
16	Paresh	Male	Certificate in Teaching	Yes	No	4	Indian	Elite
17	Quraish	Male	Certificate in TESOL	Yes	Yes	8	Indian	Elite
18	Rilwan	Male	BA in Literature	No	No	16	Indian	Elite
19	Sharmila	Female	BA in Literature	Yes	No	2	Indian	Elite
20	Thoriq	Male	MA in Literature	Yes	No	8	Indian	Elite
21	Ula	Female	Diploma in Accounting	Yes	No	9	Indian	Elite
22	Vaseela	Female	BA in Education	Yes	No	10	Indian	Rural
23	Xena	Female	BA in Education	Yes	No	23	Maldivian	Rural
24	Yasin	Male	Diploma in ELT	Yes	Yes	15	Indian	Rural
25	Zaha	Female	Certificate in Teaching	Yes	No	7	Indian	Urban
26	Asif	Male	MS in Literature	Yes	No	11	Pakistani	Urban
27	Bina	Female	MA in English	No	No	21	Indian	Urban
28	Celina	Female	Dip. in Business Admin	No	No	14	Indian	Elite
29	Dawood	Male	BA in Education	Yes	No	2	Pakistani	Elite
30	Esha	Female	BA in Literature	No	No	0	Indian	Elite

Note

# INQUIRING INTO LEARNING ABOUT NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

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## Abstract

*With its capacity to unharness the power of narrative to promote meaning-making of lived experience, narrative inquiry is developing as a credible approach to research in several areas in the field of language teaching (Johnson, 2006). This article tells the story of two narrative researchers working in language teacher education who engaged in a collaborative narrative inquiry as both participants and inquirers, in order to learn more about narrative inquiry. The "bounded" nature of their inquiry design provided a feasible way for them to explore their focus of research (i.e., their learning about narrative inquiry), and led them, through an iterative and reflexive process of analysing their narrative data, to formulate what they believe are essential ingredients of principled narrative inquiry work. Four narrative inquiry variables became the scaffolding which enabled them to answer their research questions, and are offered here as a heuristic for teaching practitioners, whether they be teachers, teacher educators or researchers, to guide them in narrative inquiries into their own work.*

## Introduction

Both Penny and Gary, the authors of this article, are involved in second language teacher education research. Penny is trying to understand how language teacher educators learn to become, and practice as, teacher educators, what she calls language teacher educator learning (LTEL) (Hacker, 2006), and Gary is concerned with understanding how English teachers make sense of their practice in the particular social contexts in which they work (Barkhuizen, 2008). We<sup>1</sup> both use narrative approaches in our research. But we wanted to move on, in two ways: (1) Neither of us had actually participated in a narrative inquiry as a *participant*, i.e. the "subject", and (2) we both wanted to learn more about narrative inquiry and the ways in which it can inform teacher preparation and contribute to our understanding of the work that teachers and teacher educators do; its epistemology, its theory and its methodological procedures.

This article reports on a collaborative narrative inquiry project we embarked upon to achieve these goals in our research work. We believe, as Ritchie and Rigano (2007) point out, that collaborating as researchers has enormous benefits not only for the outcome of the project but also for the developing working relationship between the researchers. We hope that this article presents an example of how successful such

collaborations can be. In the article we locate the inquiry in the field of language teacher education research and practice.

We describe in detail the methodology. In particular, we report on what we call a temporally and spatially “bounded” approach to collaborative data collection and analysis. We then report on the findings as they unfolded during the living of the research experience, and we conclude by suggesting implications for teachers, teacher educators and researchers who desire to use a narrative inquiry approach in their work in order to understand better what it is that they do.

## **Where we started**

At the start of the inquiry we shared a number of fundamental assumptions regarding narrative inquiry, language teacher education and their relationship. We briefly state these here before moving on to a description of the inquiry itself. Centrally, we saw (and still do see) *narrative as stories of experience*. Our subsequent inquiry discussions deconstructed these three concepts in great depth, but our starting point was that stories lived and told were the core of any narrative research activity (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Pavlenko, 2002). Polkinghorne (1995, citing Ricoeur) says that “stories are particularly suited as the linguistic form in which human experience as lived can be expressed. ... The subject-matter of stories is human action” (p. 7). For us “human action” means the practices, desires, imaginings and theories of language teachers and teacher educators, and is the very substance and essence of our narrative research work.

We were also aware that there is no clear definition of narrative research (see Smith, 2007). Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998), for example, indicate that “qualitative studies freely use the terms *narrative* and *narrative research*” (p. 2), and Kramp (2004, p. 106) notes “the absence of any single, universal” approach to conducting narrative research. A number of complex typologies of narrative research have emerged in recent years (see Mishler, 1995, for a useful overview), but most recognise a distinction between research which focuses on the socially-situated content of narratives and that which focuses on the form and construction of narratives. Pavlenko (2002) refers to the former as narrative inquiry and the latter as narrative study. At the start of our inquiry we were happy to proceed with the understanding that narrative research is, as defined by Lieblich et al. (1998), “any study that uses or analyzes narrative materials” (p. 2), and felt satisfied that our own interests lay in narrative inquiry rather than narrative study, although we realized that these two areas of focus are not distinct; focus on narrative form, in other words, is inevitable in any analysis of narrative content.

There are substantial claims made about the value of narrative inquiry for teachers in both the theoretical and empirical literature on language teacher education (e.g., Casanave & Schecter, 1997; Golombek & Johnson, 2004). Many of these are grounded in the earlier and ongoing narrative inquiry work in general teacher

education (Carter, 1993; Feuerverger, 2005; Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002). Following is a summary of these claims.

Narrative inquiry is reflective inquiry (Freeman, 2002). Through constructing, sharing, analyzing and interpreting their teaching stories, teachers get the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and to articulate their interpretations of this practice. Constructing and thinking about stories in this way, therefore, involve both introspection and interrogation. The result of this deeper understanding is change; change within self and one's practice. Johnson and Golombek (2002) make this point, saying, "inquiry into experience ... can be educative if it enables us to reflect on our actions and then act with foresight" (p. 4). When teachers articulate and interpret the stories of their practice, their *own* practice, they develop their personal practical knowledge to the extent that they act in the future with insight and foresight. As we know, reflecting and changing is not always easy to do. Any teaching situation is a complex, dynamic arrangement of many factors. In constructing stories, however, teachers bring together many of these, and in reflecting on the stories there exists the potential for them, therefore, to see the whole picture. So, as opposed to focusing on only one or two isolated variables in a particular context, stories include many of these linked together, and the process of making sense of the stories means unravelling this complexity. Furthermore, this process is a contextualized inquiry (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). As Phillion and Connelly (2004) say, "context is crucial to meaning making" (p. 460). Calls for a context approach to language teaching highlight the necessity of "placing context at the heart of the profession" (Bax 2003, p. 278), which involves teachers exploring the numerous aspects of their particular, local contexts such as the needs and wants of their students, the school and community culture, existing syllabuses and language-in-education policies, as well as the broader sociopolitical context in which the teaching and learning take place.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to a narrative space consisting of three dimensions which interconnect to provide context for any particular story. These three dimensions guided us in our planning and then during the early stages of our inquiry (see Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002, and Phillion & Connelly, 2004, for how this space has been employed to shape the design and analysis of teacher practice inquiries). The three dimensions are as follows: (a) the participants in the story - their own experiences and their *interactions* with others; (b) the *time* during which the story takes place, including its temporal connections to history and the future; (c) the physical settings or *places* in which the story is located. Any story is positioned within the matrix or space that these three interrelated dimensions create, and it is within this context that the story is understood, by both the teller of the story and the narrative researcher.

Our research questions were developed in the process of living and telling our stories of experience within this narrative space. We were only able to articulate them some weeks after we started the project: our initial conversations and storytelling were directed at finding the questions, which then, with minimal tweaking, guided us

throughout. As stated above, our aim was to learn more about narrative inquiry (NI) in language teacher education, but more specifically we asked the following:

1. What are we learning about NI by collaborating as both researchers and participants in a NI on NI?
2. What are we learning about being narrative inquirers by collaborating as both researchers and participants in a NI on NI?
3. How does our collaborative NI on NI inform our own independent work as narrative inquirers?
4. What are our perceptions of the effectiveness of the “bounded” NI approach used in this NI on NI?

## **Experiencing a bounded narrative inquiry project**

Positioning ourselves as both researchers and participants in our inquiry, we fundamentally perceive our participation as a research *experience*. This experience comprised four interrelated facets: (a) we lived stories; (b) we then told about our lived stories in written narratives; (c) these narratives were analysed and interpreted; and finally (d) we considered these three facets in preparation for an academic conference presentation (Barkhuizen & Hacker, 2006). Each of the four facets was situated within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space described above. Most importantly, the inquiry space we created was “bounded” in terms of time, place and interaction to fit in with our busy professional lives. Doing so did not compromise the qualitative, narrative methodology of the study, as we explain below. We followed typical procedures associated with a qualitative paradigm, but within the bounded context of the study’s design. In general terms, we gave ourselves three months in which to complete the whole project (*time*) (and to prepare for our conference presentation), it would be carried out locally in our own work environment (*place*), and we would be the only participants and researchers in the study (*interaction*). These dimensions are elaborated on below.

### **Living a story**

In this phase, we were essentially participants in the project; two people meeting together and talking about their lives as narrative inquiry researchers engaged in their own individual studies outside the inquiry. The *time* we allocated for this was one hour per week (maximum!), early on Friday mornings, for ten weeks. The *place* we chose for the experience was our favourite coffee shop close to our departmental offices. And the *interaction* was of a social nature. We engaged in conversation about our narrative inquiry practices and theorising. We told many stories, articulated questions and issues we were grappling with, and sometimes brought along literature to discuss. Thus our personal experiences as narrative inquirers in the field of language teacher education provided the content for our talks. We digitally recorded each conversation, not with the intention of transcribing our dialogues, but in order to readily retrieve any significant extracts that otherwise may have been easily forgotten in the flow of interaction. As we talked, we often mind-mapped or diagrammed our thoughts and ideas on paper, whilst the last few minutes of each meeting were given

to noting down the main topics of our conversation in a series of short, bullet-pointed notes. Once back in the department, we would make copies of anything we had committed to paper so that we both had identical sets of the materials.

### **Telling the story**

Having lived a story during the hour over coffee and generated certain records of the conversation, our task was to write a one-page (maximum!) personal narrative of the experience. Our *time* frame was to complete the story within half the number of days until the following meeting. As this was an individual undertaking, we each created our narrative in a *place* of personal choice and then exchanged the stories through email. We each read the other's story and then offered a written response, in no more than half a page, which we emailed back to the narrator. Although we did not initially agree to do so, we individually decided, after exchanging our first stories, that we would not read the other's response to our own story until we had read their narrative and written our response. In this way, we avoided the influence of the other's accounts in our story-writing and responding.

### **Analyzing and interpreting the narratives**

Our engagement in facets one and two generated ten sets of stories and responses; a story and response from each of us in each set. We used these materials as our primary inquiry texts, or data, and decided that they, together with our notes and bullet points, would be the only materials we would analyse and interpret. The purpose of this seemingly "limited" data was to bound the inquiry project in order to make it a feasible project within our busy lives as teachers and researchers. One aim of this inquiry, as we have stated above, was to explore this dimension of narrative inquiry with the aim of providing constructive feedback to other busy language teachers and teacher educators. While we were living and telling stories our role was largely that of participants, whereas in facet three we operated mainly as narrative inquirers. As is common in qualitative research, analysis and interpretation begins, albeit often in a very informal way, even as the data are being generated (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999), and this was no less true of us and our inquiry texts. We were conscious that once the first set of stories and responses had been created we immediately began to search for some degree of meaning in our texts, and this continued as we added to our body of data.

However, in week six we decided it was time to embark on a systematic analysis and we agreed to spend some time individually before the following meeting coding the existing inquiry texts. We approached our analyses somewhat differently. Gary adopted a highly inductive open coding method, using largely one-word conceptual labels to identify themes in each text. As he worked, he created a visual one-page thematic web, linking the concepts that were in some way connected. Penny began her analysis in a more deductive manner, by reading the stories and responses in light of the four research questions and by identifying themes that related directly to the four issues to which we were seeking answers. She represented her analysis in tabulated form. At the following meeting we compared our work and although our

approaches were obviously different, we could determine very similar salient notions appearing in the texts.

We maintained our own systems of analysis for the following two weeks, and, as we created further inquiry texts Gary added to his conceptual web and Penny continued to identify themes to answer the research questions. Working on our own between meetings and then discussing that work in subsequent conversations resulted in an iterative and reflexive process. Although important, and indeed necessary, this generated a very *close* analysis. At the same time, we found ourselves stepping back from the texts and our displays, with the purpose of gaining a broader, socially-situated perspective or interpretive view of our inquiry. We continued by categorizing our collaboratively-generated conceptual themes as they related to each of the research questions. We refer to these categories as “variables” (see table 1, to be discussed in the Findings section below). On a matrix we placed the four research questions in the top row and the four variables in the first column. Then, working independently, we considered each of the 16 intersecting cells and, mindful of all the information generated in our previous analyses, assigned to each one a notion (typically one of our themes) that represented our understanding of how the inquiry texts answered each research question in relation to each of the four main variables. For each theme we assigned an explanatory statement (see table 1), and we also selected, independently, two different sets of appropriate quotations from our stories to illustrate each theme (some of these are presented below).

### **Preparing the experience for a conference presentation**

Following the ten weeks, we had two weeks remaining of the original allotted *time* frame in which to complete the interpretation and prepare for our conference presentation. In doing so, we continued to work in our chosen *places*; at times together in the coffee shop and at others in our individual locations. Our findings were settled on in a reflexive manner as we consulted and reorganized our matrix. Once this stage was complete we worked together on the conference presentation by preparing a series of PowerPoint slides and agreeing on the sections we would each present. Our very final meeting took place over lunch just prior to the actual presentation where we simply affirmed for ourselves and each other, the material that we were to present. After the conference presentation, we collaborated further to write this article.

### **Findings**

Table 1 represents a summary of our findings. The research questions are placed in the top row of the matrix. In the first column are the NI variables: Narrative Knowing, Narrative Doing, Narrative Applying, and Narrative Feeling. These are the four major categories into which the conceptual themes are grouped. We have deliberately used the word “variable” to reference these categories because the answers to our research questions were indeed variable.<sup>2</sup> A “more or less” thread runs through all we experienced and learned. There were no definite answers to our research questions, and each theme representing the “answers” were themselves more or less evident. We

constantly found ourselves using “more or less” in our discussions and stories about, for example, what narrative is (e.g., Were our post-meeting written reflections more or less story?) and what narrative inquiry is (e.g., Should a written report on a narrative inquiry, like this one, be more or less narrative-like?).

**Table 1: Matrix representing narrative inquiry variables and research questions**

	<b>Research Questions</b>			
Narrative Inquiry Variables	1. What are we learning about NI by collaborating as both researchers and participants in a NI on NI?	2. What are we learning about being narrative inquirers by collaborating as both researchers and participants in a NI on NI?	3. How does our collaborative NI on NI inform our own independent work as narrative inquirers?	4. What are our perceptions of the effectiveness of the “bounded” NI approach used in this NI on NI?
Narrative knowing	<i>making meaning</i> “we understand by storying”	<i>co-constructive</i> “we story with someone”	<i>interrogating</i> “I ask questions about my thinking”	<i>focusing</i> “it guides and scaffolds our thinking”
Narrative doing	<i>purpose</i> “we ask why we are doing this”	<i>equitable</i> “we are doing this as partners”	<i>informed</i> “this is how to do it”	<i>feasible</i> “it can be done”
Narrative applying	<i>reflexive</i> “our thinking and practice constitute each other”	<i>reflective</i> “we ask questions about our practice”	<i>rigorous</i> “I am careful and thorough”	<i>disciplined</i> “it keeps us on track”
Narrative feeling	<i>legitimate</i> “we feel good that we are doing something credible”	<i>confident</i> “we know what we are doing”	<i>energizing</i> “I am motivated and invested”	<i>affirming</i> “we can do it”

Our four narrative inquiry variables reflect our main findings, but we believe they are also four essential ingredients of any narrative inquiry. We now describe and exemplify these variables.

### **Narrative knowing**

Polkinghorne (1988, pp.109-110) distinguishes among different types of knowledge, one of these being schematic knowledge, which is “organized according to a part-whole configuration.” For us, as it is for Polkinghorne, Narrative Knowing is, spatially and temporally, schematic knowledge. As participants in the inquiry we began over time to link, and to understand, the theoretical bits and pieces that make up narrative inquiry, and what makes it different from others sorts of inquiry. In other words, we began to *make meaning*, to understand through our storying, the parts that make up NI and how they fit together. In sum, we refer to Narrative Knowing as knowing, through narrative inquiry, about narrative and narrative inquiry at a theoretical, philosophical level, and we recognise the “tentative and variable nature” of this knowledge (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 25). Penny’s comment (from her Story #9), for example, illustrates her meaning making through storying:

I guess my experience illustrates how integral/unique/influential/the role of interlocutor is in the act of narration. That I don’t feel as clear in my thinking now has to be good. You helped me to co-construct another story - one that is far less certain and much more reasonable. Can we say then that “making meaning through telling the story” does not automatically mean gaining complete clarity/understanding? Can understanding look like confusion sometimes? Maybe it’s more or less meaning about more or less of the experience. ... Anyway, in telling this story, I seem to be making meaning of yesterday’s experience ... more or less!

She also emphasizes in this extract the role of the interlocutor in the process of collecting and analysing narrative data; another of the themes related to this variable, and directly relevant to Research Question 2. Obviously, storytellers have a listener or a reader that they tell their stories *to*, but as McEwan’s (1997) essay on the multifunctionality of narrative (e.g., to inform, instruct or transform) points out, the interlocutor plays a crucial role in the construction of stories. This co-authorship or *co-construction* was evident in all aspects of our inquiry experience and reflected in our data; both our coffee-shop conversations and our reflective story writing. In Gary’s last story (#10), he sums up his thoughts on this theme:

*All is co-construction*, in the sense of both (narrowly?) the narrator/listener relationship and the reflexive relationship with the context in which the co-constructed narration takes place (e.g. temporal, political, pedagogical, physical). Narrative doing means doing it with someone in a particular time and place. Telling and living stories *with someone*.

The next theme, *interrogating* (“I ask questions about my thinking”), is also illustrated in Penny’s story above (#9); she asks questions about the process of her meaning making through narrative inquiry, and because this theme is indexed to Research Question 3, these questions relate to her own, independent narrative research work. These sorts of questions about Narrative Knowing were evident throughout our stories. The “bounded” design of our inquiry meant that this interrogating, although wide-reaching in terms of Narrative Knowing topics, was nevertheless *focussed*. It was focussed because “it guided and scaffolded our thinking” (see table 1). In response to a diagram that Penny produced at one of our meetings, Gary wrote (Story #3):

Nice summary of where we are at – and where we’re heading. I think we should continue ‘fiddling’ with it each week, and perhaps diagram our progress regularly. Without doing so, we might begin to lose focus. The bullet-points help, of course, but the diagram makes links across sets of bullet-points.

So, although we asked many questions, about a wide range of topics, our storied interrogation was nevertheless bounded both spatially and temporally (but not cognitively, as we will discuss in the Implications section below), the result of which was “bringing to consciousness knowledge” (Lyons & LaBoskey, 2002, p. 21) about narrative and narrative inquiry.

### **Narrative doing**

Narrative Doing means narrative inquiry methodology, or approaches to narrative inquiry. It means *knowing about* doing narrative inquiry. Knowing *how to do* narrative inquiry, in practice, is Narrative Applying, and the variable to be discussed in the next section. The analysis of our experience produced four salient themes. Perhaps the most salient of these was *purpose*: Why do a narrative inquiry? What outcome is expected from the inquiry? Is narrative inquiry the most appropriate approach to use to achieve a particular research outcome? As Doyle (1997) cautions, “what one hopes to accomplish or claim has a great deal to do with whether one’s decisions about method are appropriate or not” (p. 93). Our concern in our inquiry, however, seemed to be more with the second of these questions. We, as participants in the inquiry, felt that our desired outcomes (the answers to our research questions), were vitally important in shaping the co-construction of our storytelling. In other words, the way narrative inquiry is done is determined by its purpose. And we became more and more aware that the same probably applied to anyone doing a narrative inquiry.

Penny comments on purpose in her Story #2: “This aspect of ‘purpose’ in a NI really struck me today – certainly, hearing that in your study with teachers you’re not sure if the research purpose was an important factor. Why?” In Gary’s response to Penny’s story he too addresses the importance of, and his uncertainty regarding, purpose:

I'm glad you also mention *purpose* in your story. I'm beginning to think this is the key to NI (not necessarily *good* NI, just NI): All other questions (truth, usefulness, credibility, generalizability, etc) seem somehow linked to the purpose of the narrative work that participants do. So, this is one connection you and I certainly have made so far in our inquiry. Related to purpose, of course, is purpose for whom? The teller (re-teller), the researcher?

Outside of our project we each had our own narrative work. Penny's project was her PhD research, and Gary was her supervisor. Although we are colleagues in the same university department, and also good friends, there is, at least an "official", power difference in the supervisory relationship. Of course we were aware of this when we started the project, but we declared ourselves right upfront to be equal as collaborating inquirers. This was easier said than done. In Penny's very first story she writes,

Today, as we sat down with our coffee I felt entirely at ease, knowing you'd listen attentively as you always do to my often disjointed articulations – and also knowing that you'd be the guide. ... I sense that, although there is an inevitable senior-junior partnership, we trust each other.

The nature of the inquiry relationship had also been on Gary's mind, since he responded by writing, "I had been thinking about that too – while we were talking this morning, actually." Pavlenko (2002) argues that narrative research involving teachers and learners allows for their "voices to be heard on a par with those of the researchers" (p. 214). Although, as we have argued above, stories are co-constructed in particular sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts, they are after all particular people's stories; their own discursive articulations of their experiences. Gary could not say to Penny on hearing her story that she had perceived or experienced something differently, for instance, and vice-versa. Personal narratives of experience are not factual statements that can be contradicted. Knowing this means that Narrative Doing can be a far more *equitable* activity, and thus result in transparent, insightful collaboration.

For us, this had consequences for how methodologically *informed* we became during the duration of the inquiry. In reference to her own, independent narrative work with teacher educators (this theme is indexed to Research Question 3), Penny observes (Story #2): "I think seeing you asking questions of your own practice inspires me to explore my own with more ... open-mindedness." Informed practice, of course, is desirable not only in narrative inquiry, but is a condition of any systematic research endeavour. The equitably collaborative nature of our inquiry, however, meant that we were able to do work on the project as well as our own independent NI work with much more rigour (see Narrative Applying below). At the same time, we realized that being methodologically informed is (or should be) an essential feature of all narrative

inquiry (Riessman, 1993). And because the inquiry was bounded (Research Question 4) it was also *feasible*. Penny explains (Story #1):

I liked the way the meeting progressed; how we settled on a research focus, generated ideas and clarified our thoughts. At one point I said “let’s think about it” and you said “let’s decide now.” This is a good move - to do as much as we can in the meeting; to push for ideas and answers “in the moment” if at all possible. (And yet I didn’t feel as though we were being unrealistic or that we were panicking.)

Narrative inquiry has the potential to be enormously “laborious and time consuming” (Kramp, 2004, p. 113) and knowing that Narrative Doing, if it is bounded, can be feasible and “doable” was reassuring for us, and could be for other narrative inquirers.

### **Narrative applying**

Narrative Applying is narrative inquiry on a practical, procedural level, with a focus on methods; in other words, how to do narrative inquiry. During our storytelling, we constantly had narrative practice on our minds, not only with regard to our own work with teachers and teacher educators (stories of which usually launched each coffee-shop meeting), but also with regard to the progress we were making on the inquiry itself. Two of the themes related to the Narrative Applying variable stress the relationship between doing narrative inquiry in practice and Narrative Knowing; these are *reflexive* and *rigorous*. In his Story #4 Gary explains his understanding of this reflexive relationship:

Our inquiry is a mutual constitution of our narrative knowledge and the inquiry. They inform each other – but not in a simple, bidirectional way. That is not reflexive. Reflexive means mutually constitutive. Concertedly constitutive. I’m beginning to think that this is the essence of our inquiry, and why it is so hard to articulate in the form of Research Questions what it is we are asking and doing.

His concern about “doing” in the last line is further explored in one of his later stories (#10), where he relates his recent experiences of his own narrative research with teachers to his developing Narrative Knowing and Narrative Applying (rigorous practice), as a result of the inquiry:

My experiences of these certainly tell me that because of our Narrative Knowing plus Narrative Doing on the project, there’s much better Narrative Applying (more effective, more informed, more systematic, more reflective). Which in turn (reflexively) means learning more about narrative inquiry and being narrative inquirers.

Through his experience of applying narrative methods of data collection and analysis in the project (Narrative Applying), and his independent narrative work (see Research

Question 3), therefore, Gary learned more about narrative inquiry and what it means to be a narrative inquirer (Narrative Knowing), which in turn, reflexively informed his methodological practice. This relationship between theory and practice is sometimes referred to as *praxis*, which Pennycook (1999) defines as “the mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory” (p. 342). Such a relationship does not develop easily or by itself. As a participant in the inquiry (and also a researcher), a substantial amount of *reflection* is required. Gary’s Story #3 illustrates this reflective work in process:

Writing this story took longer than the last two did – because I found myself stopping along the way to think about the things I was writing about; integrating aspects of our meeting yesterday, with aspects of former meetings, and thinking about NI possibilities for the future. I’m off to the village now, for my Saturday morning coffee, with your story #3 tucked under my arm. Will respond later.

Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) also make this connection between doing and knowing through narrative reflection. With reference to teachers interrogating their practice narratively to construct meaning, they claim that narrative inquiry is “a fundamental activity of mind, constituting an intentional, reflective activity” (p. 21). Our understanding of reflection is simply stated in table 1 as, “we ask questions about our practice.” We do this intentionally, and through introspection.

Because our inquiry was bounded, and we were determined to keep it so, it was clear to us from the start that our practice had to be *disciplined*. In Penny’s Story #4, for example, she reflects on our decision to finally formulate the research questions in our previous (one-hour) meeting: “Drafting the research questions stretched my brain cells today - I had to move very carefully through the concept of “learning about NI by doing a NI on NI.” And it’s good to have something on paper.” We gave ourselves only one hour to complete the task, and we did it, with collaborative effort. This lesson transferred to our independent narrative work as well, as Penny’s closing comment in her Story #4 illustrates: “The weekend lies ahead. I’ll spend it with one of my participants; re-listening to their story, that is. Thanks for spurring me on in this direction.”

### **Narrative feeling**

Narrative Feeling has to do with our affective responses to the work we were doing on the inquiry project. It is about emotional involvement. Every story, every response to a story, and every meeting (i.e., all the data) were held together, like a ubiquitous sub-plot, by our feelings; our feelings about narrative inquiry, about what we were learning, and about our collaboration. In the analysis of our storied data, themes relating to this variable were universally salient. For a start, we began to feel that what we were doing, in our project and in our own narrative work, was *legitimate*; in other words, “we feel good that we are doing something credible” (see table 1). In an exchange about the “purity” of our inquiry (i.e., Is it more or less narrative inquiry?) we show our concern about this topic:

*Gary (Story #2):* I think we revealed two threats today in our conversation – threats to our own sense of being narrative inquirers: (1) perspectives of some, perhaps like [name of a colleague who had questioned the usefulness of NI], of what NI is and does, and (2) a potential sense of guilt because of moving too far away from “pure” NI.

*Penny (response to Gary’s Story #2):* It’s really good that you named the two “threats.” My response is to welcome the challenge of seeking answers. I want to believe that NI can be established as a credible disciplined research approach in our field – and that we’ll feel confident about the way it develops.

Throughout the course of the inquiry, as we learned more about narrative inquiry (see Research Question 1), we felt more satisfied that what we were doing was indeed a legitimate form of inquiry. As a consequence (see Research Question 2), we grew in *confidence* about what we were doing as narrative inquirers (and, more generally, what narrative inquirers do). Golombek and Johnson (2004) suggest an interwoven connection between emotion and cognition in their analysis of the narratives of three English teachers. The teachers’ engagement in narrative inquiry created a mediational space which allowed them to “reconceptualize and reinternalize new understandings of themselves as teachers and their teaching activities” (p. 307). Golombek and Johnson conclude that their development was both cognitive and emotional, saying “engaging in narrative inquiry will indeed bring emotions to the surface as teachers recognize contradictions in their teaching” (p. 325). This situation was clearly very similar to our own experiences during the inquiry. Narrative Knowing and Narrative Feeling were intimately interwoven, mutually constituting each other. The following extract from Penny’s Story #2 sums up her emotional commitment to the project: “No trouble getting out of bed this morning! I’ve been looking forward to our meeting all week. This project - and the meetings are central to it of course - energises me no end.” Both Penny and Gary found that this *energizing* outcome of the inquiry transferred to their own narrative inquiry projects; e.g., “the motivation generated in our work today feeds into my PhD work,” wrote Penny (Story #8).

A fourth theme related to the Narrative Feeling variable (and indexed to Research Question 4) is one we call *affirming* (“we can do it”). By this we mean that, despite our many questions, our uncertainties and our complex research questions, we felt we could accomplish what we had set out to do in the project. This was certainly due to the bounded nature of the design of the project, and because we felt more and more in control of the direction of the inquiry as it proceeded, but we also, and perhaps most importantly, were learning more about narrative inquiry and about ourselves as narrative inquirers. In other words, our feelings of affirmation spread beyond this particular inquiry.

## Implications

There are, we believe, several practical implications of our project for language teachers, teacher educators and for researchers working in the field of teacher education. These relate to integral features of its design, its theoretical base, and the four narrative inquiry variables as we have discussed and exemplified them. We designed our project as a collaborative inquiry and have demonstrated the value of our collaboration in terms of our learning; about the focus of our inquiry (Research Question 1), ourselves as narrative inquirers (Research Question 2) and our own independent narrative inquiry work (Research Question 3). Freeman (2004) states that collaboration “suggests a lack of formal hierarchy among the players, a sense of mutual openness to the ideas and proposals of others, and an element of shared purpose” (p. 122). However, at the start of our inquiry we acknowledged the “official” power difference between us, but, as we have shown, engaging collaboratively neutralized this disparity and our participation became more or less co-constructive, equitable, and confidence-generating. We therefore promote *collaborative* narrative inquiry among those who want to learn more about what it is that they do, whatever their professional roles in the language teaching field. The project was also a purposely “bounded” activity. Although we identify with Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000, p. 89) notion that “living, in its most general sense, is unbounded” and therefore narrative inquiry as a form of living is also unbounded, we nonetheless argue that at times placing certain limits on an inquiry is advantageous. If, as we believe, inquiring narratively is a highly effective means to make meaning of experience, we see no reason why our understanding should be stymied for want of unlimited resources, particularly time. In fact, we are in no doubt that, notwithstanding the temporal and spatial boundedness of our project, it certainly was not cognitively bounded. Paradoxically, it is probably the case that limiting the scope of the project resulted in even more learning because of the focused, disciplined nature of all our activities. We suggest, therefore, that bounded narrative inquiry offers a feasible methodology to language teaching professionals who may otherwise not entertain the idea of research amid their hectic schedules.

Essential ingredients, we have learned, of principled narrative inquiry work are the four variables we identified in this project: Narrative Knowing, Narrative Doing, Narrative Applying and Narrative Feeling. These are not particularly surprising, contributing as they do, to the theoretical basis and methodological design of much narrative inquiry work. We propose, however, that together they have the potential to offer an introductory guide, or heuristic, for those who wish to inquire narratively into their work, whether that be teaching or teacher education. A heuristic process enables self-discovery or independent learning, either alone or in collaboration with an inquiry partner. We suggest that the guide, simply in the form of Table 1, provides a starting place for those (beginning) narrative inquirers who wish to engage in their own inquiry.<sup>3</sup> It would work like this:

1. As we have said, the four variables are both important and helpful notions pertaining to any narrative inquiry. When using the guide, therefore, inquirers

will necessarily start in the first, left-most column. They will need to know something about what narrative inquiry is, at philosophical, methodological and procedural levels. And they should be aware of the emotional investments and realisations which will occur during, and as a result of, their inquiry.

2. In order to guide (or scaffold) them through this learning process, they will look to the right in the matrix. Not all these themes will be applicable to all inquiries, but they and their accompanying explanatory statements provide signals or reminders of salient features of the theory and practice of narrative inquiry. Participants will no doubt discover new themes, and thus add their own cells, as their inquiry unfolds.
3. Participants will modify our research questions (in the first row) according to their inquiry focus, or our questions could prompt entirely new questions which more accurately reflect the inquiry aims. For example, collaborating teachers wishing to understand more about using tasks in their classroom teaching could change Question 1 to become: *What are we learning about task-based teaching by doing a narrative inquiry on using tasks in our classrooms?* And Question 2 might be: *What are we learning about our own task-based teaching practice by doing a narrative inquiry on using tasks in our classroom?* And Question 3: *How does our narrative inquiry on using tasks in our classrooms inform our other work as teachers in our classrooms?* In this case, the teachers would be working on a collaborative project, as we did on ours, with the same topic of inquiry (i.e., task-based teaching). These questions would need to be personalized if collaborating inquirers were exploring different topics.
4. The right-most column pertaining to Research Question 4 will remind inquirers of the temporally and spatially bounded nature of our inquiry, which will also then act as a guide.

We emphasise that we do not wish to be prescriptive about the focus of any inquiry (particular topics, questions or problems to be investigated), or indeed inquiry design. Each narrative inquiry will be unique, its nature very much dependent on the researcher-participants' purpose, resources and setting. Furthermore, our suggestions above, as well as the procedures used in our study and described in this article, are not intended to be a "how to" guide for prospective narrative inquirers. We hope, however, to have provided a case of narrative inquiry in practice – one which will inspire interested readers to explore both narrative and narrative research more fully themselves.

Johnson (2006) states that in the field of TESOL "the use of narrative has emerged as a predominant means of understanding and documenting teachers' ways of knowing" (p. 242). For us, the power of narrative to promote meaning-making cannot be underestimated, as we have attempted to demonstrate here through telling our inquiry story. In fact, our collaboration and reflection on the inquiry experience in order to write this article was in itself a retelling of that experience and has provided us with a further opportunity to learn. This is another aspect of the nature of narrative inquiry

that we have come to understand, and one that can be explained in Dewey's (1952) notion of the continuity of experience, whereby "every experience lives on in further experience" (p. 16). It highlights the significance for us of our inquiry in that we now have the advantage of an on-going learning experience. We cannot imagine that our explorations of "things narrative" will cease in the foreseeable future. We suggest that, through engaging in narrative inquiry, other language teaching professionals may realize a similar advantage regarding their own work.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> When we refer to one of the authors we use our names in the third person, otherwise we use first person "we."

<sup>2</sup> Conversely, we do not use "variables" in the sense associated with a quantitative, experimental paradigm; i.e., dependent and independent variables.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that aspects of the project itself may not also serve as an inquiry exemplar.

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# INDICATIONS OF LANGUAGE SHIFT FROM A PUBLIC FACE OF A SAMOAN SPEECH COMMUNITY

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## **Abstract**

*This article presents a quantitative study of code-switching in broadcast discourse from Radio Samoa, an Auckland-based radio station. A corpus was created with transcriptions from over five hours of interactive broadcasting. The Radio Samoa corpus was then analysed with a scheme based on Muysken's (2001: 10) typology of code-switching and Clyne's (2003) transference framework. Integrated lexical insertions were the most common type of code-mixing in the corpus, and there were relatively few instances of alternation and congruent lexicalisation. More detailed analysis of the integrated lexical insertions found indications of language shift typical of community languages in contact with English, such as a high degree of lexical transference and semantic expansion. Three aspects of linguistic integration are discussed and a focus on the articulation of place names illustrates details of how the process of integration works in the Samoan language. The study concludes that the language of the Radio Samoa speech community does not show significant signs of language shift, but there are definite indications of language contact.*

Little more than a decade ago, Holmes (1997) encouraged sociolinguistic research into the micro-level interactions of speakers of community languages in New Zealand to calibrate the macro-level norms that were being revealed at that time by large-scale quantitative research and ethnographic studies, and to bolster the sparse body of knowledge in the area of community language shift and language maintenance. Since Holmes' call to action, studies in community languages have fortunately become a more serious pursuit as evidenced by the growing amount of literature in this field and some successful initiatives in the area of education (e.g. Nakanishi 2000; Holmes, Roberts, Verivaki & Aipolo 2001; Hulsen, de Bot & Weltens 2002; Starks 2005; Tuafuti & McCaffery 2005; Yu 2005; Al-Sahafi & Barkhuizen 2006; Starks 2006).

The present study aims to contribute with a quantitative investigation of code-switching, a linguistic phenomenon that commonly occurs in multicultural societies or situations where languages have intense or sustained contact. *Code-switching* is when speakers use two or more languages in a single speech event (Trudgill 2000; Crystal 2003; Wardhaugh 2006) and while it has been extensively researched in the context of bilingual and multilingual interactions (see Poplack

1988; Auer 1991; Myers-Scotton 1993; Auer 1999; Muysken 2001), it also occurs in monolectal contexts, where code-switching can develop into a language in its own right (Meeuwis & Blommaert 1999).

This study focuses on code-switching as it relates to language shift, two phenomena with a tangible yet under-researched relationship (Muysken 2001: 250). An analytical scheme based on a combination of frameworks offered by Muysken (2001) and Clyne (2003) will be used for the systematic documentation and quantitative analysis of speech used on a community radio station serving the Samoan-speaking community in Auckland. This can hopefully give a micro-level indicator of the rate and direction of language shift, and if corroborated with other research methods and macro-level findings, it can offer a more complete overview of the state of a community language.

## **Sociolinguistic context**

Samoan people form the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand and have managed to maintain their language and customs despite being geographically distant from their homeland. Samoans account for 49% of New Zealand's Pacific population, with 67% of this population residing in Auckland (Statistics New Zealand 2007). It follows that the most widely spoken Polynesian language in Auckland is Samoan, although the 2001 and 2006 censuses did show a 4% decrease in the overall number of Samoans able to hold an everyday conversation in the Samoan language (Statistics New Zealand 2007). Samoans in New Zealand share a challenge with other immigrant communities in the maintenance of their mother tongue, as speakers have intense and frequent contact with English in wider society (ie. schools, the workplace, leisure activities). Because the Samoan culture and its various religions are deeply intertwined with language, these functional domains have helped language maintenance. Additionally, some successful educational initiatives at the elementary level (Utumapu 1998; Tuafuti & McCaffery 2005), the use of Samoan in media such as newspaper, radio and television, and the New Zealand government practice of producing information in many of the Pacific languages, including Samoan, have ensured that the Samoan language in New Zealand is relatively homogenous with the language spoken in Samoa. This homogeneity allows Samoans in New Zealand to cultivate and commit to complex social networks both at home and abroad and thereby maintain a unique cultural identity amidst the geographically and culturally disparate communities in which they choose to live.

## **Literature Review**

One of the most extensive investigations of community language shift was carried out by Clyne (2003) who examined the effects of English on a selection of immigrant languages in Australia. Drawing on an extensive amount of data and various

theoretical approaches, he advances a terminological framework based on *transference* “where the form, feature or construction has been taken over by the speaker from another language, whatever the motives or explanation for this” (Clyne 2003: 76). Transference of various kinds can promote the *convergence* of languages so that they become more similar, and it can facilitate *transversion*, where linguistic features cross over from one language to the other (Clyne 2003). He identifies fourteen types of transference that have been found in pluralingual studies of languages:

<b>Type of transference</b>	<b>What is transferred?</b>
1. Lexical transference	lexemes in form and content
2. Multiple transference	collocated lexical items
3. Morphemic transference	bound morphemes
4. Morphological transference	morphological patterns
5. Semantic transference	meanings between words that are morphemically or semantically similar
6. Syntactic transference	syntactic rules
7. Lexicosyntactic transference	one or more lexemes with syntactic constructions
8. Semanticsyntactic transference	meanings and syntactic construction of a whole syntagmatic unit, ie. idiom
9. Phonological transference	phonemes
10. Phonic transference	phones
11. Graphemic transference	phoneme-grapheme relations
12. Prosodic transference	intonation features
13. Tonemic transference	tones
14. Pragmatic transference	pragmatic patterns

By investigating separate aspects or layers of shift, such as lexical, syntactic, phonological and morphological changes, one can see precisely how and where languages converge and diverge (Clyne 2003: 76). This is useful for determining the impact that typological variation can have on language contact and the direction of any shifts arising from this contact. However, as Clyne cautions, “Language shift defies a predictive model because of the multiplicity of possible factors in different combinations and because of the unpredictability of many of the sociopolitical factors” (Clyne 2003: 241). This indicates that the explanatory power of the transference framework is limited to the areas on which it focuses – linguistic, sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic – but it cannot capture the total picture of contact-induced language change and shift arising from multiple causation.

An additional feature of Clyne’s framework is that it helps reconcile a long-running debate about whether or not borrowing should be included in the analysis of

code-switching. Borrowing is a process whereby words from one language are transferred into another language (Haugen 1950; Field 2002) but there is some controversy over whether loan words or borrowings should be viewed as code-switching. Some analysts firmly distinguish between borrowing and code-switching in the belief that they are two separate and unrelated phenomena. Researchers in this tradition find a distinction between the two phenomena useful to their analysis, although the distinction is rarely clear-cut or widely accepted (Pfaff 1979). Accordingly “there has developed a consensus among some linguists that there is no clear dividing line between ‘code-switching’ and ‘borrowing’, that they form a continuum” (Clyne 2003: 71). In this view, borrowing and code-switching are believed to be points on a cline of linguistic variation, and the relationship between various types of language contact, ie borrowing, code-switching, calquing, relexification and so on, is not lost.

Consistent with perspective, Muysken (2001) offers a tripartite typology of code-mixing that associates different processes of borrowing with different phenomena of code-mixing. He divides code-mixing into three overlapping types: *insertion*, *alternation* and *congruent lexicalisation*. *Insertion* is where a single lexical item or an entire constituent from one language is used in another (Muysken 2001: 3). *Alternation* describes when a structure from one language is used in another. Alternation may occur between or within clauses and often involves switching between ‘non-nested’ constituents, those with linguistic elements that are not structurally related (Muysken 2001: 97). *Congruent lexicalisation* is where speakers put “material from different lexical inventories into a shared grammatical structure” (Muysken 2001: 3). Congruent lexicalisation is related to both insertion and alternation; to the former when lexical items are shared, and to the latter when structures are shared. It is a type of code-mixing frequently found in bilingual settings where either the lexicons or the grammatical structures of the language have some similarity (Muysken 2001: 123). Borrowing is usually associated with insertion because across a wide range of language pairs, nouns are the most frequently borrowed element. However, Muysken points out that alternation is at times prompted by borrowed interjections and conjunctions (Muysken 2001: 75), while borrowed function words often feature in congruent lexicalisation, the code-mixed type that demonstrates the widest range of elements that can be borrowed (Muysken 2001: 130). In effect, borrowing cannot be strictly demarcated from code-switching, especially in work that seeks to understand patterns of language contact and shift.

A final note concerns terminology. Muysken (2001) reserves *code-switching* for instances where languages are alternated, using *code-mixing* as an umbrella term for all mixed language sentences (Muysken 2001: 1). However, Muysken’s usage is not conventional, so in this article, the terms will be used interchangeably.

## **The study**

### **Scope and Limitations**

The language in this study was collected from Radio Samoa 1593AM, a community and commercial radio station based in Auckland, New Zealand, and one of only two radio stations that offer regular monolingual Samoan language broadcasts in that area. The radio programme is aimed at the Samoan speech community and is broadcast almost entirely in the Samoan language, with occasional advertisements and music in English. This study focuses on the interactive element of the broadcast, where callers ring into the station to express their opinions in a talkback-style discussion, participate in a quiz or deliver greetings. The hosts, guests and phone-in callers are predominantly native Samoan speakers, but there is no firm data to indicate speaker proficiency in either Samoan or English. Children's programmes were excluded because hosts tended to code-switch at a far higher rate than usual to accommodate their young bilingual audience. Other speakers that were excluded from the corpus were those that were clearly not part of the Samoan speech community (ie., one Scottish caller who spoke English throughout the interaction) and those that were not located in Auckland (ie., in a programme for delivering trans-Tasman greetings, some portions featured callers from Melbourne or Brisbane).

### **Data collection**

A total of 40 hours of caller interactions were recorded over three months between 13 January and 13 April 2008, then about five hours of interactive broadcasting were sampled from these recordings and transcribed using standard Samoan orthography, with the exception that /t/ and /k/ were retained as spoken (formal written Samoan generally uses /t/). As the study comprised the final part of a postgraduate degree programme, five hours worth of transcriptions was the maximum that the author could reasonably transcribe and analyse within the given time limit of one semester. The resulting corpus had 75,173 words comprised of 30 transcriptions, each between 2,000 and 3,000 words, ranging in length from 7 to 12.5 minutes. Excluding the hosts, there were 152 unique speakers (discerned by given name). A native Samoan speaker, Mr L. Siliva, kindly acted as a Samoan language assistant and checked the transcripts against the recordings prior to analysis.

### **Data analysis**

To ensure that a range of language data was captured, the transcripts were classified as one of five types:

- Greetings: callers deliver greetings to family and friends via the broadcast, including birthday greetings, greetings to relatives overseas, and greetings accompanied by song requests.
- Quizzes: callers participate in a broadcast quiz interacting with the host or with other callers.
- Religious discussions: callers discuss religion, the Bible or Christian life

(excluding religious quizzes).

- Cultural discussions: callers express opinions about Samoan customs and traditions.
- General discussions: callers discuss current events or issues that appeared in the media in New Zealand or in Samoa.

The corpus dataset is summarised below in Table 1, tabulated by day to demonstrate the range and spread of the data.

UAM CorpusTool (O'Donnell 2007) was used to segment the transcripts into sentences (complete and incomplete) or utterances representing conversation turns. CorpusTool was then used to annotate the code-switched instances according to a scheme adapted from Muysken (2001) and Clyne (2003). Figure 1 shows the analysis scheme with glosses that briefly describe the parameters for each category.

## Results

Of 6553 segments of speech, 1160 segments included code-switching, or 17.7% of the corpus. In total, 1543 tokens of code-switching were found and each instance was analysed separately. Figure 2 shows the distribution of these instances as a percentage of overall code-switching in the corpus.

Because of the overwhelming proportion of insertion-type code-switches that appeared in the corpus, further analysis was performed to assign syntactic categories to the lexical insertions (Callahan 2004). The results are presented in Table 2.

## Discussion

### Insertion

The most common kind of code-mixing revealed by the corpus were insertions (95.78%) of established loan words that have been integrated phonologically into Samoan. These include telefoni 'telephone', polokalame 'programme' and taimi 'time'. Archaisms were also found such as pilikaki 'sardines' etymologically derived from English 'pilchard', and religious terms such as ekalesia 'church body' derived from Greek 'ekklesia' (Milner 1966). In terms of lexical transference, where words are imported in form and content (Clyne 2003: 76), the Radio Samoa corpus showed that nouns were most frequently transferred, followed by interjections and adjectives. Of the nouns, transferred kinship terms were common:

'aunty' instead of *tuafafine o lo'u tamā* or *uso o lo'u tinā* (lit. 'sister of my father' or 'sister of my mother')

'uncle' instead of *uso o lo'u tamā* or *tuagane o lo'u tinā* (lit. 'brother of my father' or 'brother of my mother')

‘grandpa’, ‘granddad’ or ‘grandfather’ instead of *tamā o lo’u tamā/tinā* (lit. ‘father of my father/mother’)

‘grandma’, ‘grandma’ or ‘grandmother’ instead of *tinā o lo’u tamā/tinā* (lit. ‘mother of my father/mother’)

‘nephew’ instead of *tama o lo’u uso/tuagane/tuafafine* (lit. ‘child of my same-sex sibling/brother/sister’)

These transferences could be attributed to the length of the Samoan equivalents which would encourage speakers to resort to the less circumlocutory expression, although speakers did prefer to say ‘cousin’ instead of *tei* perhaps due to the influence of ‘cuz’, a New Zealand English slang term similar to Australian ‘mate’. What is notable is that the equivalent Samoan kinship expressions do not appear once in the corpus, preference being given to the English substitute. Other kinship terms such as *tamā* ‘father’ and *tinā* ‘mother’ occur exclusively in Samoan but *tuagane/uso* ‘brother’ and *tuafafine/uso* ‘sister’ were switched occasionally with no clear preference for either language.

Other frequently appearing English words were ‘news’, ‘weekend’ and ‘taxi’ although ‘news’ is assimilated slightly and is pronounced with an alveolar [s] rather than [z], and the stress in ‘weekend’ is on the second syllable rather than the first. Interestingly, ‘taxi’ enjoys some degree of morphological integration as in *avetaxi* ‘taxi driver’ and *auavetaxi* ‘taxi drivers’. The most common interjections found in the corpus were ‘Hello’, and ‘sorry’, while ‘okay’ featured as both a commonly transferred interjection and adjective.

What these terms and the kinship terms above have in common is that they retain phonological features of English that are at odds with the Samoan linguistic system. Samoan has been characterised as a language where “No two consonants can come together without a vowel between” (Pratt 1984: 2) and where syllables only occur as V (vowel) or CV (consonant and vowel) (Milner 1966), but /nt/ in ‘aunty’ and /gr/, /nd/ and /th/ in ‘grandmother/grandfather’ clearly violate these rules. Also, Samoan words typically end with vowels (Milner 1966: xx) but the final consonants in ‘uncle’ [ʌŋcl], ‘weekend’ [wi:kend] and ‘news’ [nju:z] have been retained with no attempts at native syllabification (cf. Japanese *nyūsu* ‘news’).

The corpus also revealed instances where the meaning of a word is transferred but not its original form. In these cases, the meaning of a donor term attaches to a word that is morphemically or semantically similar in the recipient language (Clyne 2003: 77; cf. Haugen 1950 ‘semantic loan’). An example is *lasi* which was historically a Samoan verb meaning ‘to be many, numerous’, and features in the compounds *ma’ilasi* ‘sickly’ (lit. *ma’i* ‘sick’ + *lasi*), *matalasi* ‘diverse, varied’ (lit. *mata* ‘appearing, looks like’ + *lasi*) and *sautualasi* ‘happen frequently’ (lit. *sautua* ‘-fold, times’ + *lasi*) (Milner 1966). In the corpus, it appears that *lasi* has adopted two

senses of the English word it resembles - ‘last’ – and has taken on its function as a verb ‘endure, survive’ (Samoan *lavatia*) and as an adjective meaning ‘final’ (Samoan *mulia*’i). Similarly *seti* ‘set’, recorded by Milner (1966) as a noun, has now taken on the extra adjectival meaning of ‘ready, completely prepared’ and appeared in the corpus an equal number of times to its Samoan parallel *sauni*. A transfer that mirrors semantic developments in English is *laina* ‘line’ which occurs frequently in the corpus in reference to ‘telephone line’ reflecting the technological advance in both cultures. An extreme case of semantic expansion is *taimi* ‘time’. With over one hundred tokens in the Radio Samoa corpus, *taimi* has subsumed the meaning of *itūlā* ‘hour’, *onapō* ‘times’, *itūaso* ‘time of day’ and *itūpō* ‘time of night’. There were 10 appearances of *itūlā* in the corpus while the latter three terms are noticeably absent.

When words that are already established in a language take on new meanings, a process known as *polysemy* (Barber 2000), this brings the community language closer to the dominant language. This is especially the case here where semantic transference has occurred with words that were borrowed from English to begin with. Over time, these words can assume more functions to the extent where they even start to reflect changes that are happening to that term in the donor language. As for phonologically unintegrated loan words, most code-switching analysts view these as still belonging to the donor language and not the recipient language, but at what point does a word belong? Members of the speech community themselves might recognise these terms as belonging to English, and phonologically and orthographically it would appear so. But the frequency with which these terms occur in the oral interactions of this speech community, to the point where native language alternatives appear to be falling into disuse, indicates that these words, in particular the kinship terms, are becoming part of the Samoan language.

Another way to establish whether or not a term is considered part of a language is to see if and how it has been integrated. Clyne (2003: 142) believes that integration has three aspects: type, degree and stability. The corpus revealed phonological and semantic integration, as seen above, but there were also instances of morphological integration, such as *fa’atagatafenua* ‘like/belonging to tangatawhenua (lit. people of the land)’, *repeat`ina* ‘repeat’ + suffix, *vaipart* prefix ‘space/area around’ + ‘part’. At the prosodic level, speakers moved the stress in the Maori term ‘tangatawhenua’ from the first and fourth syllables to the second and fifth syllables, so it resembled the pronunciation of the Samoan words *tagata* ‘person/people’ and *fanua* ‘land’. Similarly speakers consistently resyllabified the diphthong in *Maori*, producing the word with stress on the newly-formed second syllable (only the first syllable is stressed in the donor language). This leads to the second aspect of integration: the degree to which words are integrated. By far the greatest number of code-switched items found were fully-integrated but the residue can help illustrate various degrees of integration as shown in Table 3.

The first two aspects of integration overlap because identifying the type of integration reveals something of the extent or degree of integration. But neither of these aspects matter much without the third: stability. Stability is where an item is regarded as part of the recipient language (Clyne 2003: 145). By whom, it is not clear, as code-switching analysts more often use frequency counts, dictionaries and intuition to prove that items have entered a speech community's repertoire, rather than gather speaker's opinions on what they consider is part of their language. In the Radio Samoa corpus, every instance of code-mixing is believed to have significance, whether a one-off experiment in an idiolect or a more widely used item that is seeking to gain currency but has not quite taken hold within the speech community. Of course, items that have been fully integrated according to all three aspects discussed are more likely to be considered by a majority of the speech community as part of their language, and these then become a measure against which language in transition can be compared.

By focusing now on place names that appeared in the corpus, we can see some details of how words become integrated in the Samoan language. Names that have been integrated fully such as the Auckland suburbs *Otara* 'Otara', *Magele* 'Mangere', *Papakura* 'Papakura', *Onehaga* 'Onehunga' showed no variation at all amongst speakers. Speakers were also consistent in pronouncing the following names without phonological integration: Mount Roskill, Henderson, Royal Oak, Grey Lynn and Mount Eden (*Mauga o Etena* is used by some churches in this suburb but this did not appear in the corpus), One might now assume that the typology of the language from which the terms are taken determines the likelihood of integration: the fully integrated names are all from Maori, a Central-Eastern Oceanic language like Samoan, whereas those without phonological integration belong to English, which is typologically more distant from Samoan. Typology is not, however, the sole factor, as *Aukilani* 'Auckland' and *Ausetalia* 'Australia', both from English, are orthographically well-established in Samoan. Interestingly though, these showed some oral variation as the pronunciations *Okilani* and *Osetalia* occurred frequently, indicating in the first syllable a diphthong [ou] that may be undergoing monophthongisation, from being a vowel with a detectable change in quality to one that is pure, as in the English pronunciation.

Some names seemed more susceptible to variation than others. Melbourne, a city in Australia, was pronounced by speakers in at least four different ways, orthographically represented as *Meluponi*, *Melupone*, *Meluponu* and *Melopone*. Manurewa, the Maori name of a suburb in Auckland, was pronounced in at least two different ways *Manureua* and *Maniurua*. One speaker used *Kelisitone* 'Kelston' (a suburb of Auckland) although several native-speaking informants, residents of Auckland themselves, say they are unfamiliar with the term ("You have to say it in English so I can understand the Samoan"). In this case, it will fall to speakers who do understand the term to give it currency in the wider speech community. Another speaker used *Gofu Shore* 'North Shore', taking the initial /n/ and changing it to /ŋ/, a technique that

changes formal or proper Samoan into the vernacular. Both these articulations, *Kelisitone* and *Gofu Shore* were unique in the corpus.

Place names are interesting because they have some constancy, though admittedly, most code-switching analysts exclude them and all proper nouns for this very fact. Hopefully the examples given here show why proper nouns need not be dismissed in the analysis of code-switching. Evidence from the Radio Samoa corpus conforms with findings in Clyne's (2003) work that language typology is a factor in language change, but not the only factor. The linguistic similarities between Maori and Samoan facilitate transversion and makes it easier for Samoan speakers to pronounce Maori place names. At the same time, speakers tend to resist phonological transfers that are foreign to Samoan, such as the /r/ (an alveolar tap) and /w/ in 'Manurewa'. Cultural connection and cultural values also play a role in determining which names become entrenched in the Samoan language. *Aukilani* 'Auckland' and *Ausetalia* 'Australia' are places with flourishing migrant Samoan communities and contemporary political, economic and social ties appear to encourage the consistent pronunciation of these place names. Additionally, the Samoans in Auckland, and generally in New Zealand and Australia, have a positive attitude to the maintenance of their language, nurturing strong social and cultural networks that promote the use and preservation of the Samoan language (Roberts 1999; Tuafuti & McCaffery 2005). What was revealed in the Radio Samoa corpus is that changes in any language are catalysed by an individual, but the rest – perpetuation of terms, the development of expressions and cessation of use – depends greatly on the speech community. In particular, through the articulation of place names we can see how speaker choice operates and how language changes emerge when a speech community accepts a term or develops and experiments with it until it 'fits'.

### **Alternation and congruent lexicalisation**

Turning now to the other two types of code-mixing, there are very few occurrences of alternation (4.05%) and congruent lexicalisation (0.17%) in the Radio Samoa corpus. Only two features of Muysken's (2001: 101-104) typology of alternation structures were annotated: smooth mixing and flagged mixing. Smooth mixing describes a seamless transition between two languages; flagged mixing is where the transition is marked. The following excerpt, glossed as necessary with a literal translation, syntactic functions (based on Milner 1966) and a free translation, exemplify smooth mixing. The host has just asked the caller to make up a question for a quiz

Caller: Um. *Ia, kakou ō la i le agaga fa'asaigikisi.*  
 OK us go then in the spirit scientific  
 IJ 1.PL.IN V.PL. GP NP NP N ADJ  
 OK, let's go in the spirit of science then.

Host: Ia.  
 IJ  
 OK.

Caller: *E...* it's an easy one. *O le ā le* CO2 stands for?  
 it's it's the be the  
 VP VP NP V NP  
 It's What does CO2 stand for?

Host: *O le ā?*  
 it's the be  
 VP NP V  
 What?

Caller: CO2. C for charlie, O for opera, and *ma le* number two.  
 and the  
 CONJ NP

Host: *Ō.* CO2 a? Gosh.  
 Oh. huh?  
 IJ IJ

Perhaps triggered by the loan *saigikisi* 'science' in the first turn (Clyne: 2003), the caller then states in English what she seems about to say in Samoan, *E faigofie* 'It's an easy one'. Beginning the next sentence again in Samoan, she switches back to English when encountering the acronym 'CO2' for which there is no Samoan equivalent. In her third turn, the caller 'doubles' the conjunction 'and', saying it in both languages (Muysken 2001: 104-106). The host's final turn in which he alternates with English and Samoan interjections is likely a response to the caller's speech patterns. In alternation, languages are largely kept separate and this kind of mixing is more structurally bound. In the caller's second turn above, the correct form of the question in Samoan is as follows:

Caller: *O le ā le uiga o le* CO2?  
 it's the be the meaning of the  
 VP NP V NP N VP NP  
 What does CO2 stand for?

Comparing this to the alternated version, the speaker has applied the relevant rules of grammar to the constituents of each language, although curiously, she uses a singular subject form of the verb 'stands' instead of the correct plural subject form 'stand'. This may be because of the lack of an auxiliary 'does' or maybe the caller has mentally looked ahead to the English answer (ie. 'CO2 stands for ...'). There is also the possibility that the caller is not proficient in the English language but there is no evidence of this in the rest of her alternated passages.

The second kind of alternation, flagged mixing, appeared 22 times. Most of the flagged mixes were direct quotes prefaced with *e faimai* 'it says' or *o le fa'aupuga lea* 'this is what it says' (ie. reading from a newspaper article), or *o le upu lea fa'aperetania* 'this is the English word'. Speakers who alternated in this way showed a clear intention to switch languages and forewarned the listener, after which the conversation then continued in Samoan. There were no cases of 'true' flagging which show "the hesitation of speakers to mix intra-sententially" (Muysken 2001: 106).

There were very few instances of congruent lexicalisation in the corpus. The languages in the current study, mostly Samoan and English, share some structures but very little shared vocabulary except for borrowings (To my knowledge, not many Samoan words have been borrowed into English). Presumably, congruent lexicalisation would be markedly more obvious in the discourse of second-generation Samoan speakers or young bilinguals.

## Conclusion

The Radio Samoa corpus has shown some precise indications of where and how the Samoan language is shifting. Samoan speakers use a high frequency of noun switches or insertions, most in the form of integrated established borrowings. If it is accepted that certain foreign words, such as kinship terms, are now part of the Samoan lexicon, then the language's phonemic base may be expanding. Unfortunately, the increased acceptance of these foreign words implies that their Samoan counterparts might eventually fall out of everyday use. Semantic expansion occurs largely with borrowed terms, although it also occurred in a word with similar-sounding morphemes (*lasi* 'last'). By graphing the phonological, morphological and prosodic features of semi-integrated insertions it was shown that integration is a non-linear and multi-layered process in which stability is a key factor. A comparison of place names demonstrated how typologically distinct languages (English and Samoan) and typologically similar languages (Maori and

Samoan) interact. It also shed light on the blurry divide often drawn between code-switching and borrowing, and supports the view that these phenomena are not only related, but exist on the same plane as other types of linguistic variation, such as style and dialectal variation (Muysken 2001). The monolingual context studied here deterred frequent alternation or congruent lexicalisation, but the relatively scant evidence available demonstrated how these two types of code-mixing might appear with the English/Samoan language pair. Bearing in mind that these findings are drawn from a phenomenon visible in only 17.7% of the entire corpus, an optimistic conclusion is that Samoan, as spoken by the Radio Samoa speech community, shows some signs of English language contact, but not yet enough to be considered significant language shift (Thomason & Kaufman 1988; Fishman 2000).

**Table 1: Summary of dataset**

Transcripts per day and type						
	Greetings	Quiz	Religious	Cultural	General	
Sunday		1	5			6
Monday	5	1	1		2	9
Tuesday	1			1	1	3
Wednesday				1	3	4
Thursday	1				2	3
Friday		3				3
Saturday		2				2
TOTAL	7	7	6	2	8	30

**Table 2: Syntactic tabulation of lexical insertions**

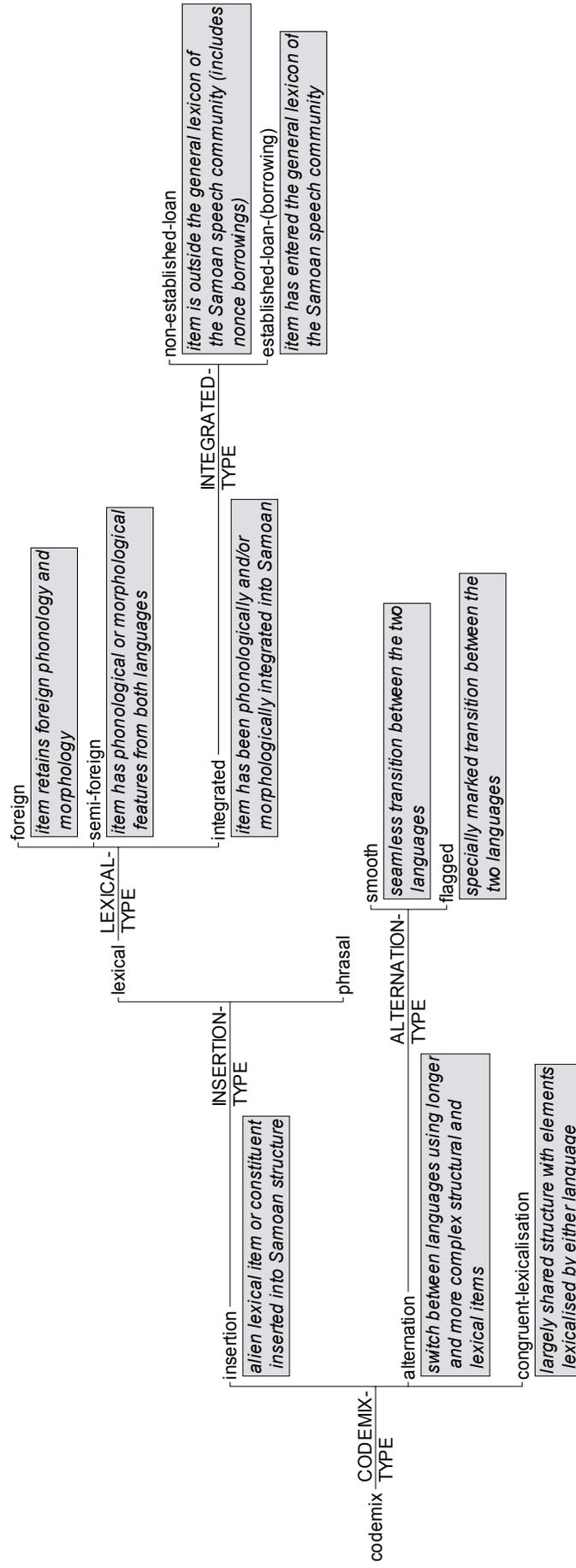
Syntactic category and type of lexical insertions									
	Foreign		Semi-foreign		Integrated		Total		
	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	Tokens	%	
Noun	346	83.57	23	71.88	910	94.11	1279	90.52	
Adjective	17	4.11	3	9.38	28	2.90	48	3.40	
Adverb	1	0.24	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.07	
Verb	7	1.69	6	18.75	26	2.69	39	2.76	
Preposition	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Conjunction	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	
Interjection	43	10.39	0	0.00	3	0.31	46	3.26	
Total	414	100	32	100.01	967	100.01	1413	100.01	

*Note: Figures rounded to two decimal places.*

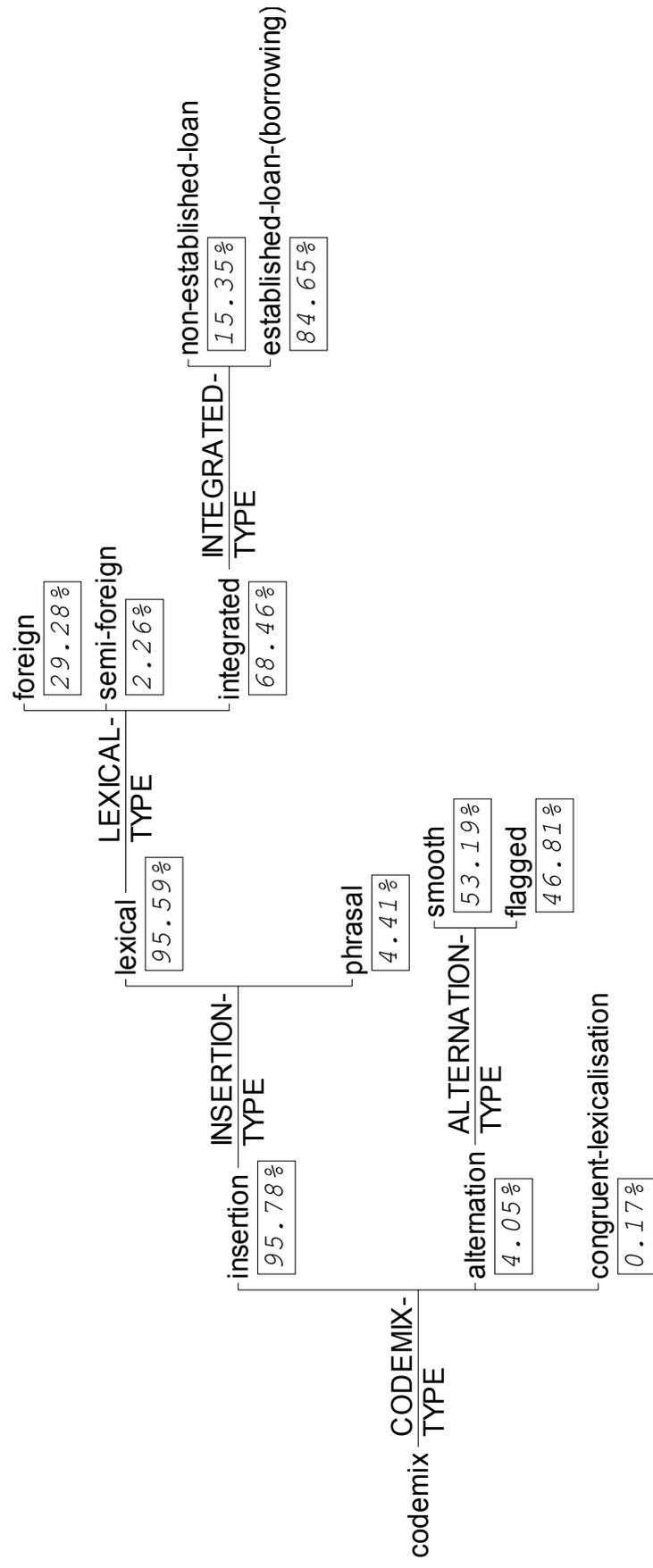
**Table 3: Examples from the corpus of three layers of the integration process**

Realisations of phonological, morphological and prosodic integration			
	Phonological	Morphological	Prosodic
<i>imeli</i> ‘email’	●		
<i>piki apua</i> ‘pick up’	●	●	
<i>fa’aMaoli</i> ‘like/belonging to Maori’	●	●	●
<i>repeat’ina</i> ‘repeat’ + suffix. Equal stress on both syllables of ‘repeat’.		●	●
<i>O le pamu</i> suck air. ‘It’s a pump that sucks air’. ‘Air’ has primary stress as in English but is articulated with a fall from high to low pitch, what Milner (1966) calls a final peak.			●
<i>avetaxi</i> ‘taxi driver’ (lit. ‘drive’ + ‘taxi’)		●	
<i>Tiriki o Waikagi</i> ‘Treaty of Waitangi’. ‘Treaty’ has been divided into three syllables, with the final consonant transformed from alveolar /t/ to velar /k/. Stress is on the second syllable in both the polysyllabic words.	●		●

**Figure 1: Analysis scheme adapted from Muysken's (2001) typology of code-mixing.**



**Figure 2: Distribution of code-switching instances**



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## **REVIEWS**

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**Davies, Alan (2007). *An introduction to applied linguistics: from practice to theory*. (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN-10: 0748612580; ISBN-13: 978-0748612581. 192 pp.**

Alan Davies has produced a second edition for the book that was the first in the series *Edinburgh Textbooks in Applied Linguistics*. Before looking at the titles of the eight chapters I tried (and not surprisingly failed) to predict how he might carve the subject up into chapters. Davies, with his impressive experience and knowledge has packaged this comprehensive coverage of the field in an original and yet accessible way.

Chapter 1, *History and definitions*, rounds up a number of attempts to define our field by familiar names such as Cook, Kaplan, Widdowson, including the author himself. Davies points out that applied linguistics was set up to fill the gap that appeared after World War II when “the expansion of language teaching ... revealed that many teachers and trainers and supervisors of teachers lacked knowledge about language” (p. 5). Yet, as the book shows, this is by no means the whole story. Rhetorical questions are one of his many devices, as in the discussion about whether, for most people, second language learning and teaching equals applied linguistics.

Only a lover of language could have written the title for Chapter 2: *Doing being applied linguists: the importance of experience*. I had to read it two or three times. To support his claim that applied linguistics has addressed many problems, Davies presents seven case studies, each demonstrating a different aspect. For example, in 1979 applied linguists produced a film analysing cross-cultural communication in British workplaces. I recall its being influential in 1980s New Zealand. Each of these six studies is revisited in the sixth chapter, where they are examined from an ethical standpoint.

Chapters 3 to 5 highlight what is special about applied linguistics, in relation first to linguistics, then to language learning and teaching, and finally to other areas of language use. Chapter 3, *Language and language practices*, looks at topics where the interests of linguists and applied linguists coincide although not, as he points out, with their sights always in the same direction. Turn to this chapter if you want a round-up of such investigations as to why the high-rise intonation for non-questions developed in New Zealand and Australia. Chapter 4 is about *Applied linguistics and language learning/ teaching* and is therefore the one that readers of this journal know most about. Yet applied linguistics encompasses much more. In *Applied linguistics and language use* (Chapter 5) other branches of the discipline are introduced, such as forensic linguistics and lexicography. There is also a fascinating peep into the world of artificial languages. I hadn't realised that in the 1870s, when Esperanto was first promoted, someone called Schleyer was inventing the language Volapuk, which was designed to be easy to learn for ‘old people, children and Chinese’ (p. 111). Apparently that turned out not to be the case, and Esperanto won.

Chapters 6 and 7 have more general themes: *The professionalising of applied linguists* and *Applied linguistics: no 'bookish theoretic'*, to borrow a phrase from *Othello*. The former is of particular interest to applied linguists who find that they cannot simply name their profession when asked what they do for a living. Even within other university departments there is not always an understanding of what the field is about. On that note, we must try not to be hurt that *New Zealand studies in applied linguistics*, now in its fourteenth year, does not appear in the list of international journals on Page 120. Chapter 7 examines the effect on applied linguistics of “current philosophical developments in the humanities and social sciences” (p. 133). Postmodernism, other Englishes and socio-cultural theory are included.

The final chapter, *The applied linguistics challenge*, was written especially for this new edition. Davies has plenty to say about the “contentious” issue of the native speaker (NS). Although the search for definitions of this NS continues, in a given context speakers and writers still seem to have no difficulty in determining who falls into *this category*. The book ends with a rhetorical question about the extent to which applied linguists (as a profession rather than as individuals) should also be activists in reference to the problems they have uncovered.

The book is a pleasure to read for its style, its theory and its weaving in of experience. Davies, who was there almost from the start, draws on details of his own professional life to illustrate points. He taught in Kenya long ago, from where he returned to the University of Edinburgh. From that base he has travelled to many parts of the world and been involved in language programmes as diverse as the teaching of English in Nepal and the testing of English in many continents. These and many other experiences are used to illustrate his points.

As with the main text, the supporting features are meticulously presented. A ten-page glossary includes the usual predictable items plus a few intriguing entries such as ‘theory not truth’ and ‘weak profession’. The term ‘hoax’ is referred to as “a form of benign fabrication, the object being to ridicule a prevailing orthodoxy and frequently to make a moral point” (P. 164). Applied linguistics books often include tasks and discussion points that make them suitable as course texts. At the end of the book there are ‘exercises’, one for each chapter. For the first five chapters these start with a reading and include questions, but Chapters 6 to 8 are limited to a very short commentary and question or two. The reference list is extensive both quantitatively and chronologically. There is a 1919 tract from the Society for Pure English and the most recent titles include many published since the first edition.

This handbook, by a tireless scholar, is recommended for professional and personal libraries.

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**Willis, D. & Willis, J. (2007). *Doing task-based teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 278 pp. ISBN: 13-978-0-19-442210-9.**

Speakers on task-based teaching at a recent local conference<sup>1</sup> noted that research on task-based approaches has tended to be theory-driven rather than oriented towards educational issues, and that as yet no successful, sustained, class-based implementation of the approach has been documented. In their latest contribution to teaching, and to task-based teaching in particular, Jane and Dave Willis offer a robust practice-based defence of the task-based approach. Their intended audience includes both beginner teachers wanting to understand task-based teaching (TBT) better, and experienced teachers who would like to broaden their repertoires of tasks and task sequences. The book draws on the authors' extensive classroom experience as well as contributions from some thirty teachers from around the world, and its wise advice could be put into practice to improve teaching in any kind of second language teaching context. Ten chapters cover key issues and aspects of TBT, and are supported by six appendices that outline sample lessons, projects and scenarios, taxonomies of task types, an example of a TB syllabus and word frequency lists (first 200 and 700).

The authors begin by exploring commonly held opinions on TBT, aiming to change some of the misconceptions that exist regarding this approach to second language programs. They very clearly set out the key distinction between TBT and PPP: that while PPP is a form-based approach, TBT is meaning-based, and although it incorporates a focus on language during the task cycle, an explicit focus on form does not appear until after the task cycle has been completed. The following four chapters (2-5) describe typical task sequences and task types, with advice on how to design, grade, sequence, and evaluate tasks and a variety of examples from contributing teachers. Chapter 6 counters the critique that TBT is "too much task, not enough language" by discussing why learners need to focus on meaning before form, and the benefits of a focus on language in use over a decontextualised focus on forms.

Chapter 7 looks at how classroom discourse can be extended to include a much wider variety of discourse patterns than the conventional question-response-evaluation and how, particularly in respect of school-based and specific-purpose classes and FL settings, TBT can bring authentic real-world language into the classroom. This chapter includes a section on the changed role of the teacher as facilitator and manager of classroom discourse in TBT. The next chapter shows how tasks can be adapted to the needs and abilities of specific classes and how fluency, accuracy or complexity aspects of tasks can be accentuated, as well as examining the important report stage that completes the task cycle. Chapter 9 discusses different types of task-based syllabuses, including those constrained by prescribed texts, exam prescriptions and/or competency based curricula in both general and specific-purpose courses.

In the final chapter the authors address problems commonly perceived to be associated with TBT (those not already dealt with in the first nine chapters). These include the possibility of adapting a traditional textbook to a TB approach, the

amount of attention given to grammar and vocabulary learning in TBT, how to motivate students to do more than the minimum and to pay attention to others in the report stage, how to give students a sense of progress and other assessment issues, and classroom management in large, mixed ability and/or unruly classes. Reader activities for reflection and classroom trialling appear at intervals throughout the book, and each chapter ends with references for further reading.

The authors are to be commended for this comprehensive but accessible book. While other texts (Bygate, Skehan and Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003, 2005; Van den Branden, 2006) offer much more theoretical and research detail, this book provides a wealth of practical advice for anyone new to teaching, as well as to those who want to find out about the TB approach. One key question remains: is the defence of TBT as an approach to pedagogy and curriculum convincing? While a number of the unjustified criticisms of TBT that have circulated over the past ten years are successfully dispelled, local teachers may, even after an appreciative reading of the book, retain doubts as to the wisdom of adopting a TB approach in every lesson of their courses, particularly in adult migrant resettlement and EAP courses involving East Asian learners in the SL environment of New Zealand. The fact that the vast majority of examples cited in this book are taken from school and FL settings reinforces a concern that there is an artificiality and trivialness to the game-type tasks on which TBT heavily relies that may have a limited appeal to many of our learners. If TBT is to become the new orthodoxy in SL and adult education environments it will, I believe, need further development.

### Notes

1. M. Bygate, L. Ortega, J. Norris and V. Samuda. (2007). *Towards an educational agenda for research into task-based language teaching*. Colloquium at the Conference on Social and Cognitive Aspects of Language Teaching and Learning. Auckland, April 12-14.

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Ellis, R. (Ed.) (2005). *Planning and task performance in a second language*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Van den Branden, K. (Ed.). (2006). *Task-based language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Lee, James F. & Benati, Alessandro G. (2007). *Delivering Processing Instruction in Classrooms and in Virtual Contexts. Research and Practice*. UK: Equinox. ISBN-10: 1845532481; ISBN-13: 978-1845532482. Pp. 161.**

There exists quite an extensive body of research on Processing Instruction, including a recent volume that deals comprehensively with the topic (VanPatten, 2004); what, the discerning reader may ask, can another one contribute to scholarship on this issue? Lee and Benati claim their volume focuses on an important new issue: that of the role of technology in language learning. This reviewer approached the book with the expectation that we would be given helpful information about adapting Processing Instruction to a virtual context.

Chapter one presents an overview of the principles of input processing and describes Processing Instruction, the instructional teaching method based on input processing. It concludes with an Appendix containing some 14 examples of Processing Instruction activities with the aim of demonstrating how these activities can be designed and used. Twelve of these activities are designed for L2 learners of Italian (I am guessing here because in a number of cases the reader was not told what the target language was, nor the targeted structures).

For someone who is not familiar with either the theoretical underpinnings of input processing, nor with Processing instruction, Chapter 1 may not be the best place to start. It can be difficult to follow the reasoning and logic behind it. Furthermore, the activities in the Appendices are not well explained; we are told that some of them are referential and others affective, but then a number are presented (e.g. Activity F & G) without reference to either of these categories. On a more minor note, the grammatical mistakes are annoying, especially as many of them represent the type of target structure (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> person '-s' in English) that Processing instruction claims to be ideally suited to.

Chapter 2 summarises the research that has looked at the effectiveness of Processing Instruction and concludes that Processing Instruction is overwhelmingly successful in teaching learners to circumvent unhelpful processing strategies (when compared with traditional instruction) and in fostering long term learning. While the author of this chapter has included and shows familiarity with a considerable number of studies dealing with a range of L2s and linguistic structures, it needs to be pointed out that there have been challenges to the claims of Processing Instruction and that it is a shame that these are not at least acknowledged (e.g. DeKeyser, Salaberry, Robinson & Harrington, 2002). It is, furthermore, to be noted that the crucial issue of the ways in which the effectiveness of this instructional technique is measured and its possible impact on the results obtained, as documented at length by Doughty (2004), is dealt with only in passing in the last paragraph of the chapter.

Chapter 3 presents a study comparing the results of Processing instruction (PI) and Traditional instruction (TI) on the acquisition of two linguistic features in L2 Japanese. The author points out that this study is innovative in that it investigates Processing instruction with a non-romance language. However, it is a pity that in designing this study the author has so clearly stacked the odds in favour of Processing

instruction, comparing it with a type of Traditional instruction which has students translating sentences from their L1 to the L2 and engaging in the manipulation of language forms without any engagement with meaning. The translation of sentences is problematic in that it means that there is focus on language other than the target structure for the TI group, so that of course the PI group receives not only qualitatively but also quantitatively superior input in relation to the target structure. The author defends this choice of activity for the TI group by saying that such activities are typically used in traditional instruction but does not cite any textbook from or on which the activities used were derived or based. The outstanding results in favour of Processing Instruction are hardly surprising. Van Patten has been criticised in the past for stacking the odds in favour of PI in this way, regrettably a study of the nature of this one does little to either promote Processing Instruction or advance our understanding of second language acquisition.

Chapter 4 is novel in that it compares the effectiveness of Processing Instruction when delivered in three different modes, that is, by computer, in the classroom and what the authors call a 'hybrid' mode, where students work with computer downloads in a classroom context with an instructor. Results show that all three groups made non-differentiated and significant gains on both target structures (preterite/imperfect distinction and negative informal commands), in L2 Spanish. While research with CALL is a welcome new direction for Processing instruction, it is perhaps regrettable that the examples of information and activities that students are given do not demonstrate what we can call the 'signature features' of PI, that is, information about the unhelpful processing strategies that impede learning and activities that foster form-meaning mappings. A further crucial drawback with research of this nature, which does not include a control group in its research design, is that one can never be quite sure that gains made cannot be attributed to having students complete the tests. It is interesting that the authors conclude that the greater gains for 'negative informal commands' may indicate that PI is not so suited to aspectual distinctions, ignoring the fact that 'negative informal commands' were relatively unknown to participants (they scored an average of 7% on the pretest while an average of 46% on the pretest for preterite/imperfect distinction) and so failing to consider that the greater gains made may be attributable to the fact that there was more room for learning with this structure.

Chapter 5 commences with a literature review which seems written without much reference to previous chapters, in that it reintroduces the key concepts of processing instruction (PI) and Traditional instruction (TI) and refers to some of the literature that has already been reviewed for us. Then, more crucially, the chapter returns to a question that has been raised previously in the research literature (Farley, 2001, 2004). This is whether Processing instruction (PI) is more effective than Meaning-based output instruction (MOI).

Given the limitations that have been outlined above with respect to the empirical research presented, the reader may remain unconvinced at some of the sweeping statements with which the book concludes in the last chapter. For example, with respect to the relative effectiveness of Processing instruction (PI) and Meaning-based

output instruction (MOI), we are told that ‘Benati’s research in this volume definitively lays that argument to rest’ and it is suggested that we regard Farley’s (2001, 2004) contradictory findings as a ‘methodological fluke’. The book ends with a discussion of the role that structured output activities may play in the classroom and an outline of the important factors to be kept in mind when designing such activities. We are then given some examples. However, we may wonder how Activity A, for example, is any different from the types of activities we have become quite familiar with in language textbooks. Crucially perhaps, how does it focus attention on form and meaning and is there any reason why students may not complete it by manipulating language forms and not attending to meaning? In Activity D, it is not clear why students are given, as stimuli, the complete answers to the exercise; completing it seems an exercise in dictation.

In conclusion, it is hard to recommend this book to the discerning purchaser. Firstly, because while it does describe a number of studies that investigate the effectiveness of Processing Instruction in virtual contexts, it does not contain much helpful information for the practitioner about how this type of instruction may be presented in this context. The four computer screens that we are shown (pgs. 94-96) are very ‘busy’ and it is not immediately clear how they reflect the principles of PI. We perhaps need to conclude that the book is more oriented towards presenting research than it is towards helping the reader implement Processing instruction. Unfortunately, however, the studies that it does present have crucial limitations, which means that they do not contribute helpfully to advance research in this area of second language acquisition.

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**Andrews, S. (2007). *Teacher Language Awareness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 978-0-387-32875-1 (Print) 978-0-387-30424-3 (Online). 232 pp.**

This book focuses on the topic of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA). This is defined at the outset of the work as the knowledge of the underlying systems of language that teachers possess which enables them to teach effectively. The work targets a broad audience of students on in-service teacher education programs, practicing teachers, language teacher educators and academics, and aims to encourage readers to consider in depth the importance of TLA, its nature, and its impact on teaching and learning. The work discusses the TLA of teachers of foreign or second languages, uses examples from EFL and ESL teaching contexts, and draws extensively on illustrations from the EFL context in Hong Kong where Andrews has worked as a teacher educator and researcher.

In the first chapter (*Language Awareness, 'Knowledge about Language' and TLA*) of this nine-chapter book, the central premise of the book is set out: language teachers need an adequate level of language awareness in order to be competent L2 teachers. In this opening chapter, Andrews reports on historical trends including the emergence of the Language Awareness movement in UK and the setting up of the association and journal *Language Awareness* in 1992.

The definition of TLA is developed in the second chapter of the work, *TLA and the Teaching of Language*. According to Andrews, TLA involves the teacher's implicit and explicit knowledge of the language, proficiency in the language, the teacher's ability to reflect on that knowledge to ensure that the learners receive 'maximally useful input for learning' (pp. 28), and the teacher's awareness of language from the perspective of the learner. The latter includes the teacher's awareness of the learner's developing inter language and the extent of difficulties for the learner posed by the language content of materials and lessons. The construct of TLA is set forth and discussed in relation to explicit and implicit knowledge and consciousness-raising in second language education.

Three of the remaining chapters of the book discuss TLA in relation to a number of areas of teaching. Chapter 3 examines *TLA and the 'Grammar Debate'*, Chapters 4 & 5 revisit the topic of chapter 2 (*TLA and Teaching Language*) and examine it in greater depth. Chapter 4 *TLA and Teachers' Subject-Matter Cognitions* examines what teachers know and believe about teaching language systems and Chapter 5 *TLA and Pedagogical Practice* describes how TLA is materialized through practices, such as planning the handling of language content in lessons and responding to student questions about language.

Three additional chapters focus on teachers. These chapters are Chapter 6 *The TLA of Expert and Novice Teachers*; Chapter 7 *TLA and The Native-Speaker and Non-native Speaker Debate* and Chapter 9 *TLA and Teacher Learning*.

One chapter, Chapter 8 *TLA and Student Learning*, discusses TLA in relation to learning outcomes. This chapter reviews the research investigating the relationship between TLA and student learning. The review is divided into three areas: teachers' subject matter knowledge, teacher engagement with the language content of learning and teacher's awareness of learner difficulties. The review finds that results from research in these areas have largely been inconclusive, although there appears to be some indication that teacher engagement with the content of learning as evident through pre and post-lesson thinking about language does have a positive influence on student learning (pp. 179). Andrews justifiably points out that until there is more research on the relationship between TLA and learning outcomes, "we are once again largely obliged to fall back on inference and logical deduction to support the link between TLA and student learning" (pp. 179).

This is a well-researched book, strong on theoretical content. It includes a careful consideration of issues related to grammar teaching and learning, and teacher cognition. The book will be of interest to academics and researchers given its in-depth review of research and the consideration of concepts in the area. There is plenty to attract a broader readership as well. The topic of the language content of language teaching is one that is of interest to almost everyone involved in language education. The writer has worked to make this book appealing. For example, the theoretical content and reviews of research are interspersed with the inclusion of 'snapshots' (scenarios) of events in EFL classrooms showing how teachers deal with language either as part of their planned instruction or in response to language related events arising during the class. In addition, each chapter ends with questions for discussion and reflection. These questions encourage the readers to make links between the ideas and research discussed in the chapter and their own teaching practice or their own views on the language content of language teaching and learning.

The work does have some limitations. In places, the book covers well-trodden ground. This is because the literature TLA draws on shares a good deal of common ground with other topics, such as, language curriculum, second language acquisition, grammar teaching, and teacher cognition. As a result, at times I wondered what is distinctive about the topic of TLA, what sets it apart from these other areas. Nearly all discussion and examples in the book concern teachers' awareness of grammar. Nevertheless, one wonders to what extent the same concepts and research reported in this work could be applied to other language systems, such as pragmatics or phonology, less familiar systems of language. I would have liked to have seen more content in the book on the means of assessing TLA. The writer does refer to his own research in the area but this is quite brief and the segment of a sample TLA test provided in the Appendix is limited. Having said that, this 'limitation' is perhaps simply the mark of a good book on an interesting new topic – the reader wants to know more.

**Thornbury, S., & Slade, D. (2006). *Conversation: From description to pedagogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. xi + 364. ISBN: 10 0-521-89116-7, ISBN: 13 978-0-521-89116-5.**

This book by Thornbury and Slade (T&S) appears in the *Cambridge Language Teaching Library* series. T&S present a thorough and well-informed overview of current knowledge about what conversation is, how it works and how it is learned. They also link the overview thoughtfully and insightfully with pedagogical issues. This linking is done in a small way in the earlier chapters, usually towards the end of each chapter, and in a more developed way in the final two chapters, which focus on teaching.

The book is well organised. It has nine chapters, the first of which focuses on a discussion of the nature of conversation, and on the range of theoretical approaches that have been taken to conversation that authors draw on in this book - from conversation analysis (CA) to critical discourse analysis (CDA), and from speech act theory to genre theory. Features of the book right from this first chapter are that T&S have drawn on a wide range of theories, and that they ground all their explanations and discussions in examples, of conversations, of other interactions, and of teaching materials, as appropriate to the issues at hand. Their approach means that the book provides a broad perspective on conversation, and it makes the concepts and issues they are addressing very accessible to readers.

Chapters 2 to 5 explore the nature of conversation in more detail from particular perspectives: the vocabulary of conversation, the grammar, the discourse features, and genre respectively. Chapter 5, 'Genres in conversation: Storytelling and gossiping', provides one of the more accessible and coherent accounts of genre theory that I have come across anywhere.

T&S then shift their attention to learning conversational competence, with Chapter 6 on first language and Chapter 7 on second language learning. The final two chapters focus on pedagogy. Chapter 8 explores teaching conversation from a historical perspective and Chapter 9, at 50 pages the longest in the book, presents current, and in particular the authors' perspectives on the theory and practice of teaching conversation. They present their own instructional model which has three elements: exposure, instruction and practice. These elements are not sequenced, and T&S show how they can appear in any order. Exposure involves listening to natural and/or naturalistic recordings of conversations. Instruction focuses on analysing transcripts of such conversations and consciousness-raising about the nature of conversation. Practice involves creating opportunities for meaningful practice of conversation.

As well as looking at the nature of conversation from various linguistic perspectives and at how to teach it, T&S also consider the role of conversation in learning. At the end of Chapter 6, 'Acquiring L1 conversational competence', they give a brief but clear summary of Vygotskian sociocultural theory of learning in which interaction with others is central to learning. From here on, there are twin themes in the

remaining chapters - learning conversation and learning *through* conversation. T&S conclude that 'in the right circumstances, and with sufficient preparation, teachers can achieve a close match between conversation-as-talk and conversation-as-medium-for-instruction, such that the second process is at the same time, preparation for the first' (p. 318), a view which they trace back to Henry Sweet's work in 1899.

T&S state that their intended audience is practising teachers, i.e., not experts in the theory of conversation. They provide analysis tasks at the end of each chapter, which allow readers to check and develop their understanding of what they have read. I think teachers will find these tasks interesting and helpful, particularly because T&S have provided clear and useful keys to the tasks at the end of the book.

T&S have covered a lot of territory and included a lot of information in this book, but they have done it clearly, concisely and coherently. There are clear sub-headings and a useful index to help readers find their way around, and the book is well written and readable. Teachers and other readers can dip into the book to focus on particular aspects of conversation, learning and teaching, as they see fit, or they can read the whole thing - and enjoy it, as I have.

There are other books which provide overviews of conversation, but none that I am aware of which (a) draws on a range of conversation theories and (b) links conversation theory and description with pedagogical issues. T&S have not only done these two things in this book, they have done them well. I am impressed with the book and recommend it to teachers and other readers who are interested in conversation, and its place in language learning and teaching.

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**De la Harpe, B. & Radloff, A. (2000). *Enhancing student writing: A Guide for integrating support into subject teaching*. Bentley, W.A. (Aust.): CEA Publications  
ISBN: 1-86342-843-7.**

This book on teaching academic writing is, in one respect at least, different from many other writing texts. Based on the authors' belief that writing is best taught within a discipline-specific context, it addresses tertiary teachers who want to not only deliver the content of their subject but also improve their students' writing skills within their subject programme. However those who teach academic writing in a more general context will find the book of interest as it provides a sound approach to the topic of writing at university, based on well-established principles of planning, drafting, peer reviewing and feedback within an interactive learning environment.

The book uses the '5 x 3' model to present the 5 stages of the writing process as a series of classes within the subject curriculum. Following an introductory chapter explaining the rationale for the authors' approach, the book outlines the steps used in each class to present the relevant stages of the writing process of pre-planning, planning, composing, reviewing and evaluating; provides the subject teachers' reflections on their lesson; and suggests additional activities. There is a strong emphasis on peer discussion and feedback in the lesson structure, and the 'after the class' reflective section is used to discuss issues and problems that may arise and possible solutions. The Appendix gives some useful materials, in particular an annotated bibliography of discipline-specific writing texts. However the emphasis throughout the book is on process, the steps along the path, rather than on materials, so that teachers will need to provide writing examples from their own discipline area. General writing teachers may see this limitation of materials as a drawback.

In presentation the book is straightforward and will appeal to the busy teacher, with its logically ordered content and simple, direct language. At times, readers may feel that the book is a little too simple in its language and perhaps directed at a reading age well below tertiary level but this is a small quibble in what is otherwise a useful account of how tertiary writing skill development can be incorporated into a discipline-specific programme. The book is encouraging in its assumption, not only that writing can be taught by content teachers within their content programmes but that this is in fact the best way to teach academic writing. General writing teachers too will find the book useful: if it covers no new ground, it presents a slightly different approach to writing development.

Perhaps the real issue in relation to this publication is how wide the targeted audience is likely to be. Many university teachers, while pointing out how little their students understand writing for their field, will assert that they have no time in their programme for teaching writing skills, nor indeed any desire to do so. There is little dispute however that there is a need for just this kind of discipline-specific writing

programme. The answer may be for a writing course to be developed within the tutorial structure of the department. In this setting, de la Harpe and Radloff's work would provide a very useful basis for tutor training and the development of course materials.

Secondary teachers preparing ESL students for senior level exams may also find this publication useful in giving a clear and simple approach to the complexities of academic writing. While it is not specifically directed at ESL students, the process approach is one that is frequently used in ESOL settings and has proved its worth.

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## GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

*NZSAL* is a refereed journal that is published twice a year. It welcomes manuscripts from those actively involved in Applied Linguistics/Applied Language Studies including second and foreign language educators, researchers, teacher educators, language planners, policy makers and other language practitioners. The journal is a forum for reporting and critical discussion of language research and practice across a wide range of languages and international contexts. A broad range of research types is represented (qualitative and quantitative, established and innovative), including cross-disciplinary approaches.

### 1. Submission of Manuscripts

1.1 Articles should be typed double-spaced on A4 paper with generous margins at head, foot and both sides. Pages should be numbered consecutively. Please retain a copy of the manuscript as this cannot be returned to authors. Submission of a manuscript implies that it has not been published previously and that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

1.2 All relevant articles submitted for publication will be reviewed by members of the Editorial Board or other referees.

1.3 Articles should normally be between 3000 and 5000 words in length.

1.4 Three copies (if posted) should be submitted to Co-Editor:

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Co-Editor: *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics*  
School of Languages, Auckland University of Technology  
Private Bag 92006  
Auckland  
New Zealand

1.5 A separate title page should include the following:

- the title of the article
- author's name, and in the case of more than one author, an indication of which author will receive the correspondence
- the affiliation of all authors
- full postal address and telephone, e-mail and fax numbers of all authors

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## **2. Presentation of Manuscripts**

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- 2.3 Do not use Footnotes. Endnotes should be avoided, but if essential, they should be numbered in the text by means of a superscript and grouped together at the end of the article before the References under the heading Notes.
- 2.4 References should follow APA referencing style. References within the text should contain the name of the author, the year of publication, and, if necessary, the relevant page number(s), as in these examples:

It is stated by McCloud and Henry (1993, p.238) that “students never ...” This, however, has not been the case (Baker & Thomas, 2001; Frank, 1996; Smithers, 1985).
- 2.5 The list of References at the end of the article should be arranged alphabetically by authors’ names. References should be given in the following form:

### **References**

#### **Books**

- Lillis, T. M. (2001). *Student writing: Access, regulation, desire*. London: Routledge.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Article in book**

Clark, R. (1992). Principles and practice of CLA in the classroom. In N. Fairclough (Ed.), *Critical language awareness* (pp. 117-140). Harlow: Longman.

### **Journal articles**

Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 157-172.

Turner, J. (2004). Language as academic purpose. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 3(2), 95-109.

### **Unpublished manuscript**

Park-Oh, Y.Y. (1994). *Self-regulated strategy training in second language reading*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama, USA.

Stein, F. & G.R. Johnson. (2001). *Language policy at work*. Unpublished manuscript.

### **Conference presentation**

King, J. & M. Maclagan. (2001, August). *Maori pronunciation over time*. Paper presented at the 14th Annual New Zealand Linguistics Society Conference, Christchurch, New Zealand.

## **3. Short reports and summaries**

NZSAL invites short reports on any aspect of theory and practice in Applied Linguistics. Manuscripts could also present preliminary research findings or focus on some aspect of a larger study. Submissions to this section should be no longer than 2000 words, and should follow the submission guidelines for full-length articles (no abstract is required, however).

## **4. Reviews**

NZSAL welcomes reviews of professional books, classroom texts, and other instructional materials. Reviews should provide a descriptive and evaluative summary and a brief discussion of the work in the context of current theory and practice. Submissions should generally be no longer than 1000 words.